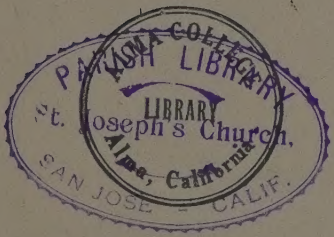
THE SAINTS

The Saints



SAINT CHRYSOSTOM

Nihil obstat

HENRICUS G. S. BOWDEN, Cong. Orat.
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BY

AIMÉ PUECH

TRANSLATED BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume, like its predecessor of some years ago, which was also dedicated to the honour of St John Chrysostom,[1] and which recommended me to the notice of the editor of this series, has been written in a purely historical spirit. It appears to me that no more satisfactory method can be employed of doing honour to this great bishop and orator, who excites our admiration in proportion to our closer study and knowledge of him.

Our acquaintance with Chrysostom is mainly derived from his own works and from the dialogue of Palladius, to which may be added different pieces of information to be found in the pages of Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, or Zosimus. Tillemont, in a volume of "Memoirs," and after him, Stilting (*Acta S.S. September*, vol. iv.), have done a great deal to arrange in order the facts collated from these different sources. Neander (*Der heilige Chrysostomus*, 1st edition, Berlin, 1821-1822, 3rd edition, 1848), has principally devoted himself to revealing to his readers the soul of John, and to pointing out to their observation his original and noble qualities. Amédée Thierry ("*St John Chrysostom and the*

[1] *A reformer of Christian society in the fourth century.*—"*St John Chrysostom and the manners and customs of his day*" (Hachette, 1891).

Empress Eudoxia," 1872), has only studied the last period of Chrysostom's life, which explains, at least in part, the fact that the portrait with which he presents us differs so much from that drawn by Neander, and is, in my opinion, less true to reality.

The thesis of Paul Albert on "*St John Chrysostom considered as a popular orator*" (1858) will also hold its place as an excellent study in literary criticism.[1] I crave permission to confine myself to these brief indications, and to refer the student for a detailed biography to Bardenhewer's "Patrology" (pages 325-331).

I must apologise for having been obliged to mention the volume published by myself. Though not a biography of Chrysostom, it contained several biographical elements. I have thought well to borrow certain portions from it, and reproduce them more concisely in the present sketch; I am speaking of the chapters relating to John's preaching at Antioch. On the other hand, I was formerly compelled to touch very briefly upon his early years, upon the great historical events at Constantinople in which he took part, and upon his exile, so that here I have written quite a new work.

I have designedly, and with great satisfaction, quoted largely from Chrysostom's own works; that being the best way of making him known. I have followed the text of Migne's "Patrology" (volumes xlvii. to lxiv.).

[1] M. Maurice Croiset's chapter in the fifth volume of "*History of Greek Literature*" (Fontemoing, 1899) may now be regarded as a sequel to it.

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First Book

YOUTH—GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I

CHRYSOSTOM'S EARLY YEARS. HIS CLASSICAL EDUCATION

THE second and third centuries were pre-eminently the age of Apologists. The very *raison d'être* of Christian literature was the conviction, universal amongst the faithful, of the necessity of defending themselves and their faith against public opinion, coupled with the desire of converting their adversaries. The beginning of the fourth century, after the victory of Christianity, beheld the greatest doctors absorbed in the first task which presented itself, namely, that of defining the orthodox faith. When this work had been accomplished by the Nicene Fathers and by Athanasius, when the empire had become, especially under Theodosius, not merely Christian but Catholic, a far wider field was opened to religious literature. Circumstances were peculiarly favourable to the growth of original eloquence.

Henceforth this eloquence will reveal itself not merely in books and in apologetical treatises, but

will speak out freely from the heights of, so to say, a new tribune, to a crowd as numerous as that of the agora or the forum, and will address it with all the ardour of faith and charity, with all the authority, hitherto unknown, bestowed by its mission. The Christian orator will thus have it in his power to become the equal of the orator of antiquity, if not by his diction, which, it must be admitted, is usually less pure, at least by his vehemence, passion, and brilliancy.

At the same time, if this crowd, to which priest or bishop is speaking, has become Christian, it is occasionally not far from being so only in name. The faith of its members is unenlightened, often intermingled with reminiscences of paganism, debased by the influence of all sorts of hazy doctrines. The morality of the Gospels revolts and terrifies them, and if they do not venture to controvert its precepts openly, they discover when it comes to practice, numberless ways of minimising them or of perverting their meaning; they cannot succeed in weaning themselves from heathen customs, they are very far removed from the ideal presented to them by their preachers. Hence the great bishops of that period were under the necessity of labouring energetically to make the morals of the Gospel, as far as lay in their power, a reality, and of causing them, by daily efforts, to be more and more welded into the ways and habits of every-day life. In a word, they strove to reform morals and to organise the practice of Christian virtue.

The fourth century lacked neither great orators

nor great apostles. St John Chrysostom, whose eloquence was in his own days unrivalled, was equally remarkable for the wonderful energy with which he sought, throughout his whole life, to impregnate both the upper and lower classes of society with the practice of Gospel morality in its full strength and purity. Before long we shall follow him in the course of this difficult undertaking. Let us first try and see how he prepared himself for it.

John, whose marvellous oratory was destined at a later date to procure for him the surname of Chrysostom, by which he is known to posterity, was born at Antioch, towards the middle of the fourth century (at a date which may be fixed as coming between 344 and 347). His family was one of the most important in the town. His father, Secundus, died young, shortly after his birth, leaving his mother, Anthusa, a widow, at the age of twenty.[1] It was she who brought him up, and we learn, through the gratitude of her son, with what boundless devotion, what enlightened affection, she accomplished her task. During his childhood and youth she was equally careful to give him the best masters, so that he might receive the most perfect classical education, and to bring him up in the utmost purity of faith. Later on, in those days of early maturity, when the formation of his character became complete and

[1] See, for the family of Chrysostom, the *De Sacerdotio*, especially i. 5 and ii. 8, and the treatise, *Ad viduam juniorem*. Secundus was *Magister Militum Orientis*.

his talent began to show itself, he tells us that she did him great service by setting him free from all material anxiety, and herself managing his patrimony prudently and intelligently. Anthusa had not, like Monica, to watch and correct the wanderings of an ardent nature, to bring back her son by patience to faith and virtue; she had only to assist, in a certain measure, at the harmonious development of a pure soul, which seems never to have been disturbed by earthly passions. We shall see, on the contrary, that on a certain occasion she resisted the eagerness which was drawing John towards the cloister; she induced him to defer these projects of retirement from the world to a later date, and it is probable that he did not put them into execution till after her death. Anthusa, like Monica and Nonna,[1] stands in the first rank of those great Christian women who are the glory of the fourth century.

The words, which, according to John himself, one of his masters, addressed to him, have often been quoted: "What splendid women we find among the Christians." John does not give the name of this master, but the expressions he uses clearly prove it was Libanius, who, as we know, had also a loving and devoted mother.

Classical education in the fourth century was still, in the main, organised on the lines which had been laid down for it in very early times. The child, after having learnt to read and write, was introduced by the grammarian to the study

[1] Mother of St Gregory Nazianzen.

of languages and history, and to the interpretations of the poets. He then passed into the hands of the rhetoricians, and, if his tastes lay in that direction, into those of the philosophers. The greatest Christian writers of the fourth century accomplished the whole course of these classical studies, and some of them, like Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, even went to complete them at Athens, which was still the university town, *par excellence*, of Greek-speaking countries. Nevertheless, we must beware of believing that the greater number of families, and consequently of students, attached as much importance to a wide general culture, as these great examples would lead us to suppose. There was no lack of utilitarians, and Libanius frequently inveighed against them. The prevalent ambition was to rise to public office, and law studies, and certain bits of practical knowledge were more directly useful for that end than rhetoric or philosophy. Libanius [1] declares that young men are mainly occupied with two things: to know sufficient Latin to be able to use the formulas of administrative style properly, and to be thoroughly up in stenography, in the practice of those *notæ*, which were then indispensable to public functionaries. John, although he did not go, like Basil and Gregory, to Athens, nevertheless took lessons from the best masters at Antioch. Antioch, a great town for luxury and pleasure, was perhaps less celebrated in Syria as a place of study than Beyrout. But in the fourth century it had the good fortune to reckon

[1] Edit. Reiske, vol. iii. p. 438.

among its citizens one of the most distinguished representatives of rhetoric, a science then almost disappearing from the world, an upright and honourable man of delicate feeling, of no more, it must be admitted, than average capacity, but possessed of a talent for words and style which was remarkable even in those days, and which obtained for him great celebrity throughout the whole eastern portion of the empire: we mean Libanius.[1] John was his most brilliant pupil. Although rhetoric appears to have had more attractions for the youth than any other branch of study, he also attended the lectures of a philosopher named Andragathia, who enjoyed a lower reputation than Libanius, and who does not seem to have exercised so deep an influence over his scholar.

The tradition which asserts that Libanius would have liked to bequeath his school to John is well known. It is difficult to say how much truth there is in it, but it is quite certain that the son of Anthusa was an enthusiast for classical studies. Although they seemed to be closely linked with paganism, although Libanius himself was a zealous defender of the old religion which he had inherited from his ancestors, John was able to enjoy literature and rhetoric, in conformity with the moderate and guardedly-expressed theory set forth by St Basil in a celebrated treatise. He had at that time an intimate friend, named Basil, possibly the bishop of that name, who, as we know, had at a later date the direction of the little Christian community at

[1] See Sievers' "Life of Libanius." Berlin, 1868.

Raphanaea.[1] When addressing to him, in consequence of events which I shall relate before long, his treatise on the priesthood, he said[2]: "We devoted ourselves to the same studies, and we had the same masters. These studies inspired us with like enthusiasm, the same principles alike regulated our conduct." What were then his views of the future? What were his projects? We do not know, but he began at the bar. If we were certain that a letter from Libanius,[2] addressed to a certain John whom he is congratulating on a panegyric recently delivered, were certainly destined for our John, we should see him successfully practising that formal oratory, which procured for the rhetoricians their greatest triumphs, and of which Libanius was a past master. But the identification is exceedingly doubtful.

What, on the contrary, is quite certain, is that whatever may have been the passion with which John at first devoted himself to the study of letters and rhetoric—and when we recall the impetuous nature that he retained to the end of his life, we can hardly doubt that it was in truth very strong—it did not last long, and above all it did not leave very deep traces in his soul. Certainly it is easy to recognise in his homilies and treatises the scholar that he had been, and always remained. His eloquence is often drawn from the wells of classical models; ideas taken direct from Plato, to whom,

[1] *De Sacerd.*, I. Raphaea was an episcopal see in the 7th Province (Syria Secunda) of the Patriarchate of Antioch.

[2] Ep. xv. 75.

with his poetic turn of mind, he would be naturally attracted, are not of rare occurrence in his pages. It would indeed be interesting to seek out—and the search would not be fruitless—the peculiarities of style which belong to his age, and make us recognise in him the contemporary and the pupil of Libanius. But what a wide difference there is between him and for instance, Synesius, who was at least as much a philosopher as a Christian. What a difference between him and Gregory Nazianzen, who kept through his whole life the sensitiveness of the artist, the impressionability of the poet, and who composed his best verses, not with a didactic intention, but from a dreamer's spontaneous instinct, joined to a very delicate feeling for art. Chrysostom did not retain, in his maturity—I do not say the enthusiasm for letters with which we see him filled in his youth—but even the wide and intelligent tolerance of which St Basil gave proof in the little work to which I referred just now. Very early did he conquer the concupiscence of the mind; very early did he cease to love art and poetry for their own sake. The passages which might be quoted in confirmation of this fact are countless in his homilies. He spares neither rhetoric, which he regards simply as a school of vanity[1] and of false pride, nor classical studies, in general[2]—he has expressed himself with the greatest severity on the subject of Homer—nor the study of law, which is in his opinion only chicanery[3] injustice and barbarity; nor philosophy, although

[1] In Joannem I. and elsewhere. [2] *Ibid.* in Genesis xxii.
[3] In Ep. ad Eph. xxi.

that was the very word he is fond of using to designate the monastic life. Therefore this severe sentence of Gibbon contains an erroneous judgment: "We recognise in him the talent for disguising the advantages that he drew from rhetoric and philosophy."[1] In reality, the former pupil of Libanius, his youth once past, appears to us as one of those who were the most completely detached from the civilisation of antiquity.

[1] Chap. xxxii.

CHAPTER II

HIS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION—HIS YEARS OF RETREAT AND ASCETICISM—HIS FIRST WORKS

ANTHUSA was a careful mother and a fervent Christian. It was doubtless to her that John was indebted for his early religious education. He has not given us any particular details on this subject; but, on the other hand, he has suffered us to be well acquainted with the fuller preparation which he received after his twentieth year from excellent masters, and which soon led him to detach himself from the world, in order to lead first the monastic life, and afterwards to receive Holy Orders.

In the Christian families of the fourth century it was not yet the rule to baptise newly-born babies. Generally speaking, baptism was frequently put off to mature years, sometimes to old age, and even to the approach of death. This custom, which seems strange to us nowadays, is explained by a certain number of different reasons, some not very creditable, others of a higher order. Besides the fact that it was, as it were, a sort of survival of the first days of Christianity, when Christians by birth were very rare, and when the Church was chiefly recruited by the conversions of men of ripe age, the principal motive was that, as baptism remits all sin, it was delayed as much as possible in order to reserve as

long as was practicable the beneficial effect of this supreme grace. "Youth must pass," said fathers and mothers, and young people were baptised when they were considered to be disgusted with vice. It was supposed that baptism alone could do away with certain great crimes; and it was carefully kept in reserve against certain deep relapses into sin. Mingled with this somewhat base prudence was a more noble sentiment—namely, the notions which people then held concerning penance, which were far more serious and alarming than those of our day. We shall subsequently see Chrysostom energetically combat these abuses, of which there are countless illustrious examples.[1] He himself, nevertheless, according (as we have just seen) to the general custom, was not baptised till rather late, doubtless towards 369, through the zeal of Meletius, who soon afterwards ordained him lector.

The two principal masters who prepared and trained Chrysostom for the religious life were Meletius and Diodorus of Tarsus. The former was Bishop of Antioch from 360 to 386. Of a prudent disposition, he was elected at the time when the discords caused by Arianism were still very intense and it appears that, although he was of the orthodox faith, it was generally expected that he would show himself conciliatory towards his adversaries. But,

[1] Constantine to begin with; Probus, one of the most celebrated magistrates of the fourth century, often eulogised by contemporary Christian writers, was only baptised at the end of his life; Nectarius, whom John succeeded as Patriarch of Constantinople, was not yet baptised when first there was the idea of raising him to the episcopate.

on the contrary, he proclaimed his faith in the clearest fashion in an oration which he pronounced, after his consecration, before the Emperor Constantius. Later on, under Valens, he was exiled from 370 to 378; and Flavian, who afterwards became his successor, was during this exile, with the assistance of Diodorus, the real head of the orthodox community at Antioch. Meletius was less a theologian than a man of action, devoted to his church, striving to exercise direct influence over his flock, a foe to all exaggeration, and (as Chrysostom will remember later on, when his early years of impulsiveness and enthusiasm were over) less given to admiring certain rather ambitious excesses of contemporary asceticism than to recommending the unostentatious practice of the active virtues even in the world.[1] Diodorus, who later on became bishop of Tarsus (378-394), and to whom John always remained attached, was, on the contrary, before everything, a man distinguished for learning. He is the head of that exegetic school of Antioch, whose principles were afterwards pushed farther by his pupil, Theodore of Mopsuesta, and which is so diametrically opposed to that of Alexandria. Whilst the Alexandrians, from Origen downwards, delight in allegorical interpretations, Diodorus, without ruthlessly prescribing allegory, gently relegates it to the background, and teaches that we must never lose sight of the historic sense of the Scriptures. It was he who, like Lucian, in the preceding century,

[1] See, for instance, the saying that Theodoret relates of him. H. E., iv. 26.

made of Antioch in the fourth a brilliant centre of higher theological studies. His teaching exercised a deep influence over the development of thought in John, whose homilies, nearly all composed under the form of commentaries on the sacred writings, are, as regards exegesis, absolutely faithful to the method extolled by Diodorus.

In order to make our account quite complete, we must add to Diodorus and Meletius a less well-known person, namely, Carterius, who seems, at the same period, to have contributed to the shaping of John's character. Carterius presided at Antioch, over what Sozomen[1] calls an ἀσκητήριον. Ought we to take this as a real monastic community, established, contrary to the custom of the day, not in solitude, but in the very heart of the town? We should, perhaps, rather understand it to have been a sort of school, a chosen band of young men enjoying more liberty than in a convent properly so called. Diodorus instructed them in Christian doctrines, and Carterius trained them in certain ascetic practices. However it may be, John, a few years after his baptism, his imagination set on fire, in common with many young Christians of his day, by the account of the marvels related of the Fathers of the Desert, was possessed with the idea of himself retiring into the mountains near Antioch, which had very early been filled with cenobites or anchorites; for Syria was one of the first provinces of the empire to follow the example set by Egypt. When we picture to ourselves the general state of

[1] Sozomen viii. 2.

Christian society in the fourth century, as we shall soon make acquaintance with it in the works of John, we find it easy to understand the irresistible impulse which drew the most generous souls towards solitude. As the Christian world grew larger, the relaxation of morals had become more perceptible. People felt how difficult it was for the pure doctrine of the Gospel to become without alteration or concession the absolute rule of life. They conceived, when confronted with the ordinary mediocrity of prevailing morals, the same disgust which the Christians of the first centuries had experienced at the sight of pagan corruption. Monasticism was recruited by the moral *élite* of Christian society, just as Christianity had then been by that of pagan society, through the medium of attraction to greater perfection, even also by the allurements of more rigorous severity. And thus almost all the great men of the fourth century fell, in some degree, under the influence of asceticism. They almost all, at the beginning of their maturity, went through a critical time, when they were hesitating between the active and the contemplative life, the *βίος πρακτικός* and the *βίος Θεωρητικός*,[1] John, who, later on, pronounced so decidedly in favour of the first, was rushing, during the period in which we are studying him, towards the second, with all the vehemence of a young and ardent soul. He has told us, in the first pages of his beautiful treatise on "The Priesthood,"[2] of the dreams that he then cherished, and

[1] Thus St Gregory Nazianzen (Carmen de vita sua).

[2] *De Sacerdotio*, i. 4-6.

how they were shared by Basil, who had previously, as we have seen, been the companion of his classical studies, and the enthusiasm with which they inspired him. But he was stopped by the resistance of Anthusa, who could not make up her mind to such a sacrifice.

He felt obliged to remain at Antioch, with Diodorus, Carterius and Flavian. Nevertheless, his reputation for learning, eloquence and holiness was already great, and he was very nearly sharing the fate of many others in the fourth century, that of being raised to the episcopate against his will. He has related this story to us, without specifying all the details, in the beginning of the treatise on the Priesthood. The date may be put approximately towards 373. It was wished to make both him and Basil bishops. But John, leaving his friend in ignorance of the fact that he intended to slip away, did not think himself worthy to accept an office which, later on, when he was summoned to Constantinople, not only he did not seek, but only received through obedience. Unknown to Basil he took flight, whilst Basil on the contrary remained, and was obliged to suffer himself to be consecrated. These incidents furnished John a little later with the opportunity for composing his treaty on the priesthood, which he dedicated to Basil, and in which he took care to explain, in a long introduction, the motives which had then dictated his conduct. One of these motives—though John himself prefers to speak to us of the fear of not being worthy of this exalted office—must certainly have been that

he had not in his secret heart renounced the hope of one day leading an ascetic life, and in fact, shortly after these events, in 374 or 375, he realised his dreams. Had Anthusa yielded to his entreaties? John has told us nothing about it, and it is probable that if he had succeeded in moving her, he would not have failed to inform us. Therefore it is more probable that she was dead, when he left Antioch for the mountains in the neighbourhood. There he at first led for four years the life of a cenobite, then desiring to carry out the trial to the utmost, he lived for two years as an anchorite in a cavern, until he began to feel that his health was being injured by such austerity.[1] He then went back to Antioch, ready henceforth to ascend in their regular order the steps of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He was first ordained deacon in 381 by Meletius, who had baptised him, and who had come back from exile three years previously. In 386, after the death of Meletius, to whom Flavian had just succeeded, he was ordained priest. From that date begins the great period of his life, where all of a sudden, are simultaneously shown forth, in their fulness, his great oratorical talent and the not less remarkable gift that he had for influencing and directing souls.

But the last years of this first period, the account of which we have just closed, were not entirely devoted, either to the ascetic practices that we have related, or to simple preparatory studies. They were already years of fertility in which John, not yet having a

[1] See on this subject the dialogue of Palladius.

pulpit at his disposal, expends, in a great number of treatises, some brief, some, on the contrary, of considerable extent, that eloquence which welled forth so naturally from his soul, and which absolutely needed outpouring. These different works are interesting on more grounds than one, not merely from the nature of the subjects, but also because John hardly ever, in future years, made use of this form of dogmatic treatise or dialogue—he is destined to excel in homily, and he will confine himself to it—and also because the very ideas, without offering any formal contradiction to those which we shall meet with shortly in his great oratorical works, nevertheless exhibit, compared with them, differences which, though minute, are fairly perceptible; the tone, in any case, in which they are expressed, is not the same. And it is not always the tone only which is sometimes harsher and more violent. To say the truth, John always retained a vehemence of language, which has often caused somewhat hasty critics to form erroneous judgments concerning the real moderation of his mind.

But at the period of his full maturity he was very anxious to manage prudently and considerately the different interests by which he found himself surrounded; very desirous of not compromising by any fatal exaggeration the beneficial effect of his preaching; he knew exactly, through the daily contact between himself and the populace, how much he could require of the mass of the faithful, and however high may have been the ideal which he delighted in presenting to them, he never exacted from them

in reality more than was possible. In the days of his youth—it is no great matter for surprise—he had not yet attained that marvellous equilibrium which we admire in him during the time of his preaching at Antioch, and which towards the end of his life he sometimes again lost at the time of the great crises, into which his encounters with the Empress at Constantinople led him. A certain youthful exuberance, a certain want of practical sense, are noticeable in these first works.

To this period, that is to say approximately between 375 and 381, may be assigned the following different writings which, distinguished as they are by a most uncompromising character, seem to belong to the period of keen asceticism through which John passed at an early stage of his career; the exhortation to Theodore after his fall[1]; the two books on Penitence (Περὶ κατανύξεως) dedicated, the first to Demetrius, the second to Stelechius;—the three books against the adversaries of monasticism (Πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν ἐνάγουσιν)—the little pamphlet entitled: Comparison between the king and the monk, which shows alone by its title that John was at this period not only in a high fever of asceticism, but still perfectly accessible to the influence of his early studies; for this theme is *par excellence* a classical theme, in which the monk, who is declared superior to the king, holds the place of the stoic philosopher;—the three books

[1] Λόγος παραινετικὸς εἰς Θεόδωρον ἐμπεσόντα. A second discourse is entitled in our editions: πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν Θεόδωρον λόγος β. The question is whether they were addressed to the same person.

of consolation and advice, addressed to the demoniac Stagirius (*πρὸς Σταγείριον ἀσκητὴν δαιμονῶντα*);—a treatise on the Priesthood[1] in dialogue form, one of the most carefully finished of his works as to detail, and at the same time one of the longest dogmatical expositions that he ever wrote;—a certain number of works in which the son of Anthusa seems to us anxious to pay, in some degree, the debt of gratitude that he had contracted towards his mother, in the shape of good advice addressed to widows: To a young widow (*Εἰς νεωτέραν χηρεύσασαν*);—on monogamy (*Περὶ μοναν δρίας*);—lastly, the treatise on Virginity (*Περὶ παρθενίας*).

I shall leave rather on one side the different treatises referring to monasticism, including that on Virginity. It is sufficient for me to remind my readers of what I have already said of John's state of mind when he wrote them, and how it differed from that which we shall see him subsequently reach. When in his priestly office at Antioch, or episcopal at Constantinople, he was brought into closer contact with the life of his flock, he was at greater pains to proportion the ideal towards which he urged for them to the requirements of civil society. He better understood the value of family life; he depreciated active life less, though at the same time

[1] We have seen above that the events which gave Chrysostom the opportunity of composing this treatise doubtless took place towards 373. But nothing proves that Chrysostom composed it immediately afterwards, and the historian Socrates (vi. 3) puts the date of it towards the end of the period that we are studying (381), after John had already received the diaconate. The perfection of the work makes this date probable.

he did not cease to admire the nobility and purity of the ascetic life. I have no thoughts myself, *per contra*, of depreciation of the latter; I merely mean to say that in this first period Chrysostom sang its praises with a certain amount of exclusiveness. The most striking proof that can be adduced is that of the treatise on Virginity, about which I must say a word or two.

It is undoubtedly, in more than one page, an exquisite work, full of grace, freshness and brilliancy, illuminated and coloured by the very youth of its author; nevertheless, we occasionally feel ill at ease in reading it. John, with the natural moderation of his mind, sets himself to combat simultaneously two opposite extremes; that of the various heretics (Marcionites, Valentinians, Manichæans, and the like), who condemn marriage too severely; that, on the other hand, of certain persons among the faithful, who place virginity and marriage on the same level, or even tend to depreciate virginity more or less directly. The position which he thus takes up is in the main impregnable, and equally far removed from the two extremes. But in both the arguments that he sustains, Chrysostom does not show himself quite the same man as he will become in the future. Against the heretics who despise the flesh his language is often wanting in restraint, as when he declares that "the worst lust is not as criminal as their continence,"[1] and in speaking of marriage, whether he underrates it in opposition to those who exalt it too much, or, even whether,

[1] Ch. v.

on the contrary, he reinstates it against its detractors, his style of argument not infrequently surprises us. For instance, it is with sorrow that we find the son of Secundus and Anthusa declaring that in reality there are no households that are not unhappy, and displaying, with manifest exaggeration, the sad spectacle of inharmonious homes, whilst he concludes with these words: "If such is the condition of husbands and wives, it is not well to marry."[1] "Incessant quarrelling, mutual hatred, such are the pleasures of marriage." This is evidently an outburst of youthful vehemence, and in this second part of his treatise, Chrysostom, unknown to himself, was ending by drawing little by little nearer to those Manichæans or Marcionites whom he opposed at the beginning; it is true that he does not, like them, condemn marriage, but if he does not condemn it, he despises it.

The "Exhortation to Theodore" deserves not to be passed over in silence, since it is perhaps John's oldest work. It is uncertain whether the Theodore to whom it is addressed, was the celebrated theologian, who later on became bishop of Mopsuesta, who was, together with Chrysostom, the most remarkable among the pupils of Diodorus of Tarsus, and who ended in heresy. However that may be, the Theodore whom John reprimands, possessed with the same enthusiasm as John and the greater part of the friends around him, had entered upon monastic life. He had then rather early regretted his breaking with the world, began to think of returning to it, and had

[1] Ch. xii., *Cf.* Evang. Matt. xix. 10.

allowed himself to fall violently in love with a young girl named Hermione. The vehement letter, written to him by Chrysostom in order to make him ashamed of what the priest regarded as a treason and a sacrilege, is full of beautiful and eloquent passages, or of curious anecdotes, very characteristic of the manners of the times.

The history of the young Stagirius, to whom, towards the same period, John addressed, not a remonstrance, but rather a letter of consolation, mingled with advice, is not less interesting in this respect. Born of a great family, Stagirius had entered a monastery without the knowledge of his father, but with the connivance of his mother. His health was weak, his mind rather unbalanced; possibly he was the victim of some morbid disease inherited from ancestors. In the monastery to which he had gained admittance he was treated with all the consideration that his state of mind and body required; the care of the orchard was entrusted to him; he was not forced to assist regularly at night office. Although the rule was thus mitigated for him, the trials of the ascetic life were too much for him. A sudden illness, described to us by Chrysostom, declared itself; it consisted of terrible fits, akin to convulsions, followed by extreme prostration, and accompanied with violent hallucinations. In the intervals of these crises he was a prey to an unconquerable melancholy, and felt himself incessantly tormented by temptation to suicide. His contemporaries, and Stagirius with them, and John himself with Stagirius, beheld in this state all

the signs of demoniac possession. Consequently Stagirius had been specially careful to seek, though fruitlessly, a remedy for his ills by visiting the tombs of the martyrs, and by going to see the anchorites, who were held in the greatest veneration, but he had not obtained what he hoped for. Of the long work in three books that Chrysostom addressed to him, almost the whole of two, the second and the third, are filled with little but an enumeration of similar misfortunes, designed to show Stagirius that his case is not exceptional, as he imagines. But in other passages John gives him advice, here subtle, there touching, which shows him to have been already a master in the direction of souls, and which occasionally make us think of Seneca conversing with Serenus. He teaches him how he ought to fight with the black thoughts which beset him; if there is no remedy against the physical ills which torment him, such is not the case with the discouragement which holds his soul in anguish. Although he is persuaded, like Stagirius himself, that this state of desolation is due to demoniac action, John strives to countervail the evil spirit: "The devil is not the author of this gloomy mood, but the melancholy comes to the aid of the demon and suggests to you all these bad thoughts."[1] John, on the other hand, tries by every means to make beneficial suggestions to Stagirius; he wishes to inspire him with the confidence and moral strength which they impart.

We shall see later on with what scrupulous care, with what penetrating observation, with what modera-

[1] At the beginning of the Second Book.

tion, and, at the same time, what dignity, Chrysostom treated, chiefly in the homilies delivered at Antioch, all questions relating to marriage. The position of widows, usually a very delicate one in the society of those days, claimed his special attention. He has often painted it in very dark colours, whether he is recalling the dangers that they run, in the management of their property, from covetous relations, or whether he is pointing out the moral peril to which they are exposed. Sometimes, as a contrast, he has drawn more consoling pictures, as in those beautiful pages of the first book on the Priesthood, in which he paid his mother the tribute of gratitude that he owed her. Among the writings which I have mentioned above, in which the question of widowhood is discussed, I will point out as peculiarly attractive the words of consolation which he addressed to the widow of the young Therasius (Πρὸς νεωτέραν χηρεύσασαν).

The most important of all the writings of the first period, towards the end of which, moreover, it ought probably to be placed, is, I have already said, the treatise on the Priesthood. This long work, in six books, is composed in the form of a dialogue—not that John is really trying to rival Plato—he always prefers keeping to the oratorical style. Although the preface, in which the author describes the events in which he had been mixed up together with Basil, and presents his friend [1] with

[1] This apology is curious, on account of the effort that Chrysostom, following the footsteps of Plato in a well-known passage (Rep. iii. 266), makes in order to justify certain falsehoods, which

the apology for his conduct, is very fully developed, it is nevertheless nothing but an introduction. The real end which John has in view is undoubtedly to set forth, in didactic fashion and as fully as possible, the duties and the office of a priest or bishop. Obviously we have here before our eyes a work in which Chrysostom reaches the just and equal balance of maturity. Despite the reservation that I made just now, as to what concerns the art of the dialogue, the composition is more regular than is generally the case in the works of our author, in whom we constantly meet with the freedom and impetus belonging to oratorical improvisation; the language is remarkably pure, and the style has been carefully revised. As to the subject-matter, what first strikes us is the power of thought, the accuracy of observation, or the intuition with which John makes up for the experience which he still lacks. For it must not be forgotten that, however much we may strive to assign the composition of the treatise to a date after the events which were the origin of it, it is in any case anterior to the period in which Chrysostom received the priesthood, and can hardly be later than 381.[1] Therefore the author has not yet had experience of the high office of which he treats. But he has, first of all, within his own breast, a most lofty ideal; he has likewise the results of a very penetrating power of observation, already extending over a wide field. He knows

have an honourable object. Such, he says, are not ἀπάτη (deceit), but οἰκονομία (policy or tactics).

[1] John was ordained priest, as we have seen above, in 386.

how difficult, in his own day is the task of a true priest who is likely to make enemies in direct proportion to his virtues. From that time forth he seems to have foreseen the violent hostility or the miserable intrigues with which he would have to struggle, when, in the see of Constantinople, he began his work of reform. Numberless little details which he thus gives us on the relations of the clergy with the faithful are confirmed by the many similar instances that we find in his later homilies.[1] The transformation which took place at this date in the soul of Chrysostom, and which, detaching him little by little from asceticism, brought him back in the direction of active life and its duties, is revealed to us when we see him comparing the monk, not now with the king, but with the bishop, and without going so far as to declare the monk the inferior, nevertheless asserting that he does not surpass the bishop, that father whose family is at once so large and so undisciplined, who governs only one city, and yet has more cares than the emperor himself; for he can scarcely act except by persuasion, and hardly ever by authority.[2] "The bishop ought to have as thorough a knowledge of the world as those who live in intercourse with the world, and, nevertheless, his mind ought to remain free, even more so than that of the monk who lives upon a mountain. The austerities which distinguish the monk depend on the constitution of the body;

[1] *Cf.*, for instance, *De Sacerdotio*, iii. 14, and the homily on the Epistle to the Philippians ix.

[2] Beginning of the Fourth Book.

the virtues of the bishop all have their dwelling in the soul, and may be developed, whatever the state of the body and under any exterior circumstances. If he who lives in solitude, and shuns all communication with the multitude, excites admiration, I most willingly admit that his action is indeed a proof of constancy; but I cannot allow that strength of mind is sufficiently shown thereby; for he who, in the inner part of the harbour, stands at the helm, has not yet furnished any real proof of his skill; but he who in the open sea, and in the midst of a storm, is capable of saving the ship, ought to be recognised by all as the best pilot." The bishop has therefore become, in a certain sense, the master of the whole city, and his clients are difficult to satisfy; they must be protected in case of need against the unreasonable demands of the treasury or the civil authority; they must be considered and treated delicately in a thousand ways; and the bishop must beware of going frequently into the houses of the rich, if he does not visit the poor also. Innumerable cares absorb the head of the Christian community in a large town; the management of the Church property, the distribution of alms, are added to the ministry of the word and to the direction of souls, and expose him to many temptations as well as to much hostility. On all these points Chrysostom describes in the most minute detail the difficulties against which priests have to struggle, and gives them advice as to the means of overcoming them.

The maturity that he had gained, the moderation

of ideas that he now knew how to maintain, despite the impetuosity of his feelings, are especially manifest when he treats of the information that the good bishop ought to have, of the talents and knowledge that are required of him. As he has often done in his homilies, *à propos* of other delicate questions, he shows marvellous aptitude for avoiding two different kinds of excess and for combating two opposite tendencies. In fact, it often happened in the fourth century (the sudden elections like that from which Chrysostom himself fled are a proof of it) that in the choosing of a pastor little attention was paid to the professional training which the different candidates might have received. The belief that the new bishop would receive with ordination, as a gift of the Holy Ghost, all the talents that might be necessary for him was common. At every turn the example of the apostles was brought up; the difference of times and circumstances not being taken into account. In this there was a two-fold danger; first, that of giving to communities superiors of mediocre capacity, to whom attention had been drawn by their high social position rather than by their merit; secondly, that of appearing too willing to reduce the office of the priest to his liturgical functions. Chrysostom, who, be it observed, has written, in the Treatise on the Priesthood, admirable pages on the Liturgy, one in particular often and deservedly quoted on the Eucharist, was also much engrossed by the danger which was run by reason of incompetent pastors. Like Gregory Nazianzen, like Jerome, like so many other great Christians of the age, he pointed

out accurately and clearly the difference which separated his epoch from the apostolic times. He spared no pains to explain to his adversaries the real meaning of certain texts in the New Testament to which they appealed; to make them understand, for instance, what part was really played by St Paul, his favourite apostle. Thus *à propos* of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ii., he says, "This is what has injured most people, and has made them more careless about knowing the true doctrine. As they could not penetrate the apostle's ideas very well, they abandoned themselves to a kind of sleep of intelligence, and extolled, not the ignorance that Paul attributes to himself, but another, from which he was as far removed as anyone could be. Even admitting that this ignorance should be attributed to him, what would be its signification with regard to us? For he has a strength more powerful than words. How can anyone not blush to compare himself with such a man? Even if, putting aside his miracles, we recall his sanctity and consider his absolutely heavenly life, we shall see that the defender of Christ conquered still more by these last than by his miracles. These people understand by an ignorant man, not one to whom the vain eloquence of the world is strange, but also one who does not know how to fight for the doctrine of truth. The apostle, on the contrary, only speaks of ignorance in the first of these two senses. How, I would ask, did he make the Jews of Damascus blush for shame, since he had not yet begun to work miracles? How did he triumph over the Gentiles? Why was he

sent to Tarsus? Was it not because he excelled everyone else in power of speech? How did he withstand the Judaising converts at Antioch? Did not that areopagite of a town blindly given up to heathen superstition, follow, together with his wife, the call of the Gospel after simply hearing a sermon from Paul? Why did the Lycaonians take the apostle for Hermes? For it was indeed the effect of their miracles that he and his companions were regarded as gods, but that Paul should have been taken specially for Hermes was not the effect of their miracles, it was the effect of his words. How is he distinguished from the other apostles, and why is he so much admired, not only amongst us, but among Pagans and Jews? Is it not on account of his eloquence? So much for the adversaries of his epistles!" But there was the opposite extreme. In these Greek and Eastern cities, so much enamoured of exquisite wording, there was also a risk of becoming more attached to the manner than the matter, of letting oneself be touched only by fine effects of style, of giving no more than a merely superficial attention to the words of the sacred orator. We shall often subsequently see Chrysostom, when preaching at Antioch, stop, by vigorous protestations, the applause of his hearers, and complain that they are more struck by the originality of a metaphor than by the wisdom of counsel. Already, in the Treatise on the Priesthood, he had given the same advice.

Here is a passage from the Fifth Book: "Do you not know what a passion for eloquence has now

taken possession of the souls of Christians, and that those who excel in it are specially honoured, not only among the heathen, but also amongst ourselves. Most people behave at a sermon like spectators at a circus, and we see the crowd divide into parties, some declaring in favour of this preacher, some of that, and they listen to the discourse with different sentiments according to their different tastes with regard to the orator."

We have seen how Chrysostom, after having first of all refused the episcopal office, for which he still thought himself ill prepared, considered it necessary to go first into solitude to steep his soul in the severest austerities. It may be, even, that when he retired thus into the mountains near Antioch, he did not think of returning. But five years of asceticism exhausted him, and doubtless also he was too much naturally drawn to active life not to feel sooner or later the desire to return to it.

He has nowhere taken us into his confidence on this subject, but for anyone who knows him the inference is not improbable. What Chrysostom went to seek in retreat was neither peace nor rest, nor oblivion; he had nothing to forget, the passions of the world had not wearied him, and conflict had more attractions for him than peace; he wished to lay up a store of energy, a reserve of strength that he was soon impatient to expend for a good cause, when he felt them, so to say, overflow his soul. It is thus that he came back to Antioch, to meet once more his dear bishop Meletius, now recalled from exile, and that he received first the diaconate, then

the priesthood. About the time when he became a deacon, the Treatise on the Priesthood shows us that he was ready for the accomplishment of the task to which he was going to devote himself; he had preserved all the ardour of youth, he had acquired a lofty and tranquil reasonableness; he was full of zeal, full of eloquence, full of charity; his years of apprenticeship had drawn to their end, and the greatest period of his life was about to open.

Second Book

CHRYSOSTOM'S PRIESTHOOD AND HIS PREACHING AT ANTIOCH

CHAPTER I

THE ORATOR AND HIS AUDIENCE

IT will be remembered that John was born, according to Tillemont in 347, according to Stilting in 344. When Flavian, after the then quite recent death of Meletius, ordained him priest in 386, he was therefore approaching his fortieth year, or had scarcely completed it. He was in all the strength of his age, and the maturity of his genius. The new bishop of Antioch, Flavian, who had already, during the exile of Meletius, been the real head of the Christian community, was old, and though deeply attached to his flock, had more devotedness than eloquence. Thus he willingly entrusted the ministry of the word to John, who, in the first days of his priesthood, pronounced his first homily, which we still possess. From that time, for twelve consecutive years at Antioch (386-398), and subsequently for six years at Constantinople (398-404), he preached almost uninterruptedly with inexhaus-

tible talent, and with constant anxiety and care that his sermons should be efficacious, that he should not leave uncombated any contemporary weakness or superstition. To begin with, let us see what part he played at Antioch during those twelve years, which, except for the episode of the statues, appear at first sight, less brilliant, and are unquestionably less tragic than those of his episcopate; but, nevertheless, it is then we can best learn to know the depths of his soul, to understand the work that he was eager to accomplish, and to admire at the same time the energy and the moderation, the ardour and the tact, with which he worked for it.

Antioch was, next to Constantinople and Alexandria, the most notable town in the whole of the East. Nicomedia, which had enjoyed considerable importance at the beginning of the century, had been, at the period which we are now contemplating, ruined by an earthquake. Antioch, which was the usual starting-point for the expeditions directed against the Parthians, had often served as an imperial residence in the first half of the fourth century, and in consequence owed to these different visits an increase of importance and fresh adornment. Diocletian had erected in it several temples, baths and palaces; Constantine built a beautiful church. The old town the Palæa (παλαια) was distinguished from the new, which occupied an island in the midst of the river.[1] The marvel of which the inhabitants were most proud was a street like the Rue de Rivoli

[1] This information is partly derived from Libanius in the Antiochicos; partly from Dion Chrysostom.

in Paris, but lined on either side by porticoes, and thirty-six stadia long. The city was very well provided with water, which was not at all rare in the Roman Empire; and what, on the contrary, was uncommon, the lighting of the streets by night was wonderfully well organised. It was surrounded by a circle of rich suburbs, among which the village of Daphne was in highest repute. The population, without equalling that of Constantinople, or even that of Alexandria, reached a high figure, about 200,000 souls.[1]

The majority was Christian, and very proud of the great traditions which connected the city with even apostolic times;[2] it was there that the new teaching had been first made known to the Gentiles, the name of Christian pronounced for the first time; it was there that Paul had withstood Peter to the face. The more recent memories of the persecution under Diocletian, during which the old church in the Palæa had been destroyed, were not less glorious. After the triumph of Christianity the town had been for a considerable time torn between the quarrels of the Arians and the Catholics; under Julian it had shown itself strongly attached to its faith, and the emperor had to suffer a good deal from Syrian insolence. When this great crisis was over, discussions began again within the community; a very high-minded set could not

[1] This can be established by the comparison of certain texts of Chrysostom (Panegyric of Ignatius 5, adv. Judæos I. 4), and Libanius (Ep. 1137). The actual number was more likely under 200,000.

[2] See the 7th homily on St Matthew.

pardon Meletius, despite the exile he had endured for their sake, for having been ordained by Arian bishops, and continued, even under Flavian, to form in the new town a separate church, which had at its head Paulinus.

Such was the internal condition of Antioch when John began to preach. The Christian towns were not then divided into parishes, each having its special body of clergy. Therefore it was to all members of the community without distinction that he addressed himself, and he spoke by turns in the different churches, two of which are well known to us; first, the most important, called the Great Church, built by Constantine and described to us by Eusebius[1]; then the old church, the Palæa, less enormous and less decorated, but very much beloved by John and by the faithful, because tradition traced its origin back to the apostles, and because it had been despoiled under Diocletian. Let us add that the sacred rites (the synaxes, as they were called) were often performed in the environs of the town, in the chapels in honour of the martyrs which were scattered all over the country.

I have already said that John was the regularly appointed preacher of Antioch through the whole episcopate of the aged Flavian. He preached at every season of the year, but, as was natural, more often at certain periods; during Lent it was almost every day. Let us mention, among John's most

[1] Life of Constantine, III. It was a rotunda, raised like a dome on an octagon base of building. It was called the Golden Church from the magnificence of its ornamentation.

famous Lents, that of 387, in which he preached the famous homily on the Overthrow of the Statues, and that in which he preached the Commentary on Genesis (the date is difficult to fix). In an ordinary way John tells us himself that he did not preach more than once a week, on Sundays; twice at most, on Saturday and Sunday. As a general rule he addressed himself indiscriminately to the whole community; sometimes, however, his homilies were addressed to a limited audience, as, for example, when he instructed the catechumens (but of his catechetical discourses only two have been preserved to us); perhaps on other occasions also, when he invited a chosen public to a kind of retreat (it is possible that the homilies on the Gospel of St John were delivered on some of these special occasions). Besides the different series of sermons that I have just mentioned, the following also belong to the Antioch period: the five homilies on Anna (in 387), the three on David and Saul (the same year), the two homilies on the obscurity of the Prophets (about 386), the six homilies on Isaias (the same year), the ninety homilies on the Gospel of St Matthew (about 390), the thirty-two homilies on the Epistle to the Romans (391), the homilies on the two Epistles to the Corinthians (392 ?), various series of homilies against the Jews (387-389), against the Anomeans, and so on.

Chrysostom was a born orator, and from the very beginning conquered and charmed the people of Antioch. He is certainly one of the greatest of all the masters of rhetoric, whether sacred or profane.

To begin with, he has marvellous facility, which we can appreciate even nowadays, for his homilies, which, as a rule, he did not take the trouble to revise carefully with a view to publication, appear plainly to us as admirable specimens of extempore preaching. All this fluent speech is borne along in rapid motion, and at the same time coloured and warmed by ardent passion; the period is not concentrated nor vigorously condensed like the Latin period, or like that of Demosthenes—on the contrary it develops gradually, and step by step, from time to time unexpectedly gathering fire, with a certain unconstraint, but withal most graceful unconstraint. The style, now lofty and majestic, now, on the contrary, easy and familiar, is specially remarkable for the inexhaustible variety of the imagery, of metaphors alike original and natural, of comparisons as apt as they are striking.

But marvellous as is this eloquence, I confess that it is not what seems to me Chrysostom's most precious gift; I admire still more something rarer, something almost unique; the practical turn and the efficaciousness of his words. In that particular no one surpasses or even equals him, no one, perhaps, is, to the same extent, so constantly anxious to be directly useful, to choose for each of his discourses a definite object, always to exercise immediate and deep influence over souls. And what proves conclusively that it is just that which is not only the most important, but also the most difficult thing for the sacred orator, is that Crysostom did not succeed, we may say, all at once; he improved little by little,

and only arrived by degrees at the master-power which distinguishes him.

We have, as I have already said, his first homily; it is well prepared and much adorned with flowers of rhetoric. We are only too conscious that the orator, in making his first essay, thinks that he owes it to himself and to his audience to embellish his discourse with florid language, and all sorts of graceful turns of phrase. We must also remark that at this early period he devoted himself less exclusively than in the future to that task, in appearance so obscure and humble, in reality so fruitful, which soon became his best-beloved work, the direction of the faithful, their moral improvement. Theology, properly so called, or polemics, against the different sects, which allowed of striking great and resounding blows, had then more attractions for him; it is thus that he made campaigns, according to the received theory, against the Jews and the Anomeans, instead of confining himself to withstanding them by allusions scattered over the thread of his discourse. His audience, being very fond of fine passages of rhetoric, of passionate outbursts of eloquence, and also of subtle reasoning, would willingly have encouraged him in that way. We constantly see by the familiar reflections with which he intermingles his homilies, that this Syrian public, attached as it was to good speaking, then applauded him enthusiastically, while it wearied of those long preludes, of that detailed and accurate development, in which the orator strove to bring the explanation of the sacred text

within the reach of the most simple, and that it endured with scant patience those bold perorations, in which all the vices of the day were unsparingly and plainly attacked.

But from the second year of his preaching, after the great crisis of the sedition in 387, the orator perceptibly changes his method. It is from the date of this crisis that intimate union is completely established between the pastor and his flock, and that the pastor seems more at his ease, and able to speak with perfect freedom. Thenceforward the homilies of Chrysostom are nearly all made on the same plan; two elements, in varying proportions, are always mingled in them; one portion exegetic and dogmatic, in which the instruction seeks above all things to be simple, clear, intelligible to all, the other portion consisting of moral exhortation, familiar, urgent, topical. But in both the language bears the same stamp of efficaciousness; in every part we feel that the orator is close to his audience. When Chrysostom absents himself for one day he exclaims: "I have been separated from you for one day, but I was as uneasy and impatient as if my absence had lasted a whole year. And you know, by what you felt yourselves, that I tell you the truth." [1] "You are like the young of the swallow waiting for their food," he said on another occasion to his people.[2] His ardour is more glowing when he observes that the church is well filled, and that the attention of the congregation is thoroughly aroused,

[1] Homily on the text: *In facie ei restiti.*

[2] On the text: *Hoc autem scitote.*

but he is not discouraged when the public is small in number. "The preacher ought to preach whether people listen to him or not, just as water flows, although no one draws it."[1] Such is the fraternal tone of this eloquence, which avoids all affectation of superiority, and thus steals more surely into human hearts.

In order to feel himself nearer to his brethren, John—and it was an innovation—preached, if we are to believe the historian Socrates, not in the usual place of bishop or priest, but at the ambo, at the lector's desk. And what care he took to make his words each day appropriate to the fresh dispositions of his flock! to know exactly the varying constituents of his audience! Now we have a courteous welcome to the peasants of the surrounding country districts, poor people speaking hardly anything but Syriac, and who rarely come to the town.[2] Another time it is a long exordium in which he will not hesitate to sum up in detail what he has said on the preceding days, so as to be clearly understood by strangers, passing through Antioch, who are present at the Liturgy.[3] When excusing himself for the irregular arrangement of his sermons, he exclaims, "If I treat of so many things in each of my sermons, if I vary them incessantly, it is because I desire that each person should have a special bit, that he should find his own spoil; and that no one should return home empty handed,"[4]

[1] *De Lazaro I.*
[2] 19th homily on the Statues, *cf.* ix. on Genesis.
[3] *De Lazaro III.*
[4] In Joannem, xxiii.

and it is probable that many a particular allusion, that his contemporaries understood instantly, escapes us now. Nevertheless, despite this extreme care about accuracy and truth, John, at any rate, during his stay at Antioch, always avoided personalities, understanding perfectly that though they might have delighted the exceedingly satirical mind of his Syrian public, they would have produced less utility than scandal. "I name no one; fear nothing,"[1] he said plainly one day, which proves at once that he maintained a delicate prudence, and nevertheless did not shrink from some tolerably intelligible allusions.

Such was, to consider it in its most general characteristics, that admirable preaching of twelve years at Antioch. We shall now study it more in detail, either by singling out some important episode, or by pointing out what ideas John was most fond of expressing, and what reforms he attempted.

[1] xxxvii. in Matt.; *cf.* vi. in Ep. ad Eph.

CHAPTER II

THE SEDITION OF 387

THE best known episode of Chrysostom's preaching at Antioch is that which originated in the famous sedition of 387. The eastern Greek towns were always very turbulent, and Antioch was one of the most undisciplined. Moreover, in the fourth century popular tumults, generally caused by the exactions of the treasury, were only too often justifiable. It was causes of this kind which, at the end of the winter of 387, roused the inhabitants of Antioch. We have a two-fold account, agreeing in the main, of these events—that of Chrysostom and that of Libanius. The crowd first went to the church, demanding the Archbishop Flavian, and begging him to intercede with the governor. Then it rushed to the agora, and as if possessed with a kind of intoxicated fury, flung down the statues of the imperial family (that of the Emperor Theodosius, of the deceased Empress Flaccilla, and those of the two young princes, Honorius and Arcadius), finally it was beginning to set fire to the houses of the principal people of importance, when the military intervened, and in a short time restored order, not without brutality. When the riot was over the position of Antioch was very serious. A crime of

high treason had been committed. Theodosius was a severe master, who became carried away by passion directly he found himself confronted by resistance, and who did not hesitate to punish revolt harshly, as was soon to be proved by the massacre of Thessalonica.[1] Therefore there was general despair in the city, when the agents of the *comes orientis* set out to inform the emperor of these events. Doubtless, according to the narrative of Libanius, as well as of John, the riot had been the work of a few turbulent men; in any case it was, it seems, among a particular set of vagabonds, of whom Chrysostom has often spoken to us, and who formed in some measure the *claque* of the theatre and the circus, that the most desperate of the rioters had been recruited. But over and above the fact that Chrysostom and Libanius have an interest in exculpating their compatriots, and in all probability slightly extenuate the seriousness of facts, the danger was not less great, even if their statements are quite correct; the innocent were liable to pay for the guilty, and at Antioch already, as happened later at Thessalonica, the fate of the whole city was really at stake.

The emperor was far off, and a long time passed before any decision was arrived at. The magistrate who ruled at Antioch, the *comes orientis*, had sent some of his agents, some *curiosi*, to Constantinople, in order to transmit to Theodosius his report of the sedition. Almost immediately after their departure, the bishop Flavian had set out himself, despite his age, to intercede with the emperor in favour of the

[1] Three years later, in 390.

city, and he endeavoured to get the advantage of them in swiftness. In this he did not succeed, and before his arrival two high commissioners, Cæsarius and Hellebicus, had received full powers to chastise the rebellious town, and had left Constantinople for Antioch. The measures which they took immediately on their arrival were most hard and rigorous; they affected the classes as much as the masses, and those amongst the members of the senate at Antioch who had not fled were thrown into prison. At last Flavian arrived at Constantinople, was received in audience by the emperor, succeeded in moving him, and obtained some mitigation of severity in the measures of repression. It was during this long interval, which is nearly contemporaneous with the Lent of 387, that Chrysostom delivered his celebrated series of twenty-one homilies, generally known under the name of Homilies on the Statues.[1]

I will not study in detail this series of homilies, interesting as it might be to do; but, after having pointed out what appears to me their most noteworthy characteristics, I shall select the most curious episodes in the course of the long crisis, which the homilies describe, almost from day to day. The first thing which strikes us in them all is the extraordinary sympathy between the orator and his public, which puts them into harmony with each other under all circumstances. Both the mass of the people and the aristocracy of Antioch are in a

[1] The chronology has been settled in a perceptibly different manner in the seventeenth century by Tillemont, in ours by Hug.

state of frantic excitement; they hurry in crowds to the church;[1] John rises in the midst of them and speaks, not as a superior nor as a master, but as a brother, a companion in misfortune, who associates himself in a certain way with the faults of the culprits, who seems to share their fears, and whom we might suppose to be threatened by the same danger as they are. It is, in fact, because he loves his people so much, that he will feel himself struck if they are struck, and that is why he reads their souls so clearly, divines day by day their most fleeting impressions, and on every occasion pronounces the discourse most calculated to raise their spirits.

At the beginning of the crisis Chrysostom is obliged to be silent for a week; but he appears at the ambo as soon as it is possible for him to do so. He reminds his hearers that in a preceding sermon, some days before the disturbances, he had plainly pointed out the danger which might be run by all, through this scum of the population, this idle and immoral multitude from whom the late rioters had been by preference recruited.

"It appears to me that I did not utter those words of myself, but that God, Who foreknows the future, inspired me with them; for, if we had chastised those wretches, what has happened would not have happened. See, if to-day we are all in terror,

[1] At least, on the days when the danger appears serious; when, on the strength of some more or less authentic rumour, this fickle and impressionable Syrian crowd again becomes hopeful, it attends the sacred mysteries in smaller numbers.

the fault must be laid to the charge of those people. If we had ere now banished them from the town, we should have no causes for alarm now. I know very well that good conduct has always reigned in our town, but a collection of strangers, of men without shame, who have long given up the salvation of their souls, have dared anything. You have endured their wicked acts, and now God has permitted the great wrath of the emperor, in order to chastise our negligence by the peril to which we are exposed."[1] Then he takes advantage of their emotion to show how clearly the emptiness of the goods of this world appeared in the hour of the recent catastrophes.

But now Flavian has departed, and at the same time Lent has begun. Without discontinuing his custom of making constant direct allusions to the crisis which is still going on, Chrysostom will resume his ordinary mode of instruction, and will succeed in compelling his people, despite their troubled minds, to listen to homilies of austere morality. Since it is Lent, he will explain the true nature of fasting, which has no value, unless accompanied by pure and regular life (Homily iii.). He will make long comments on a commandment which the inhabitants of Antioch frequently break, and on which he was fond of preaching, "*Swear not at all*" (Homily x.). Some homilies, such as the sixth and seventh, will be almost exclusively, despite the obligatory demands of the situation, a commentary on two verses of Genesis. But the crisis will soon again become of an acute character, and there will

[1] Homily i.

be sinister rumours in the air. Just at this period Chrysostom falls ill, and during his absence the multitude, in terror and anguish, rush to the church, whither the most important official in Antioch, the *comes orientis*, feels himself obliged to go likewise, in order to calm them by his harangues.

When John reappears at the ambo (Homily xvi.), he is beside himself with indignation, for it seems to him that his hearers had become guilty of a sort of infidelity towards him; and his anger is the greater, as the *comes* happened to be a pagan. Meanwhile, it is now known that Flavian has not been able to outstrip the *curiosi*, and that the imperial agents are making their entrance into the town. All those who have been able to flee from Antioch have fled, especially the rich;[1] the solitaries of the surrounding mountains alone, on the contrary, have come to the city in crowds, to bring by their presence consolation and encouragement to their brethren in danger; and one of them, an illiterate monk, but a brave man, dares to seize by the bridle the horse of one of the commissioners, so as to compel them to listen to a short and burning harangue, in which he exhorts them to mercy. "The first men in our senate, the men occupying the most important offices, the possessors of countless riches, those who usually enjoyed the greatest credit with the emperor, all abandoned their houses, and thought of nothing but securing the safety of their persons. Kinship, friendship, seemed no longer to exist. But the monks, poor men, who possess nothing but a

[1] The same complaints from Libanius confirms John's statements.

wretched garment, who before this seemed to have no right to consideration, who were acquainted with nothing but their mountains and their wild defiles, arrived in all haste, with generous courage; when every one was fleeing full of terror, they entered the town, and obtained, not in the course of a few days, but in the twinkling of an eye, the desired result—the calming of the storm, and then they returned to their solitary cells. Such is the power of that doctrine of wisdom which Christ came to bring to men. Yes, what am I to say of the rich and powerful amongst us, when even those who received the power of judging, those who filled the highest offices (Cæsarius and Hellebicus), when entreated by those monks to behave with moderation, replied that the line of conduct to be followed did not depend on them, for it was a dangerous thing, not only to offend the emperor, but to leave unpunished, after having apprehended them, those who had incensed him. And, nevertheless, these men triumphed over everything, and by their magnanimity and patience they succeeded in forcing the commissioners to exercise power, which they had not received from the emperor. They managed, although the culprits had been discovered, to persuade the judges to delay sentence, and to refer the matter to the decision of the emperor. They promised to induce him to pardon the rebels, however difficult it might be; and they were just setting off, when the judges, struck with veneration for their generosity and wisdom, would not let them undertake the long journey; they only asked for a draft

of what they intended to say. Once provided with this manuscript, the authorities decided to go themselves to the emperor, and pledged their word that it would make sufficient impression on him to cause him to forget his anger. So we earnestly hope."[1]

It was, according to Chrysostom's account, the intervention of the monks which brought about the suspension of the capital sentences. But, for all that, Antioch was not entirely freed from her fears. Besides the fact that the future remained uncertain, Cæsarius and Hellebicus had, immediately on their arrival, cast into prison all the senators who had not fled from the town; the title of metropolis of the Syrian province, with the advantages attached to that title, had been taken away and transferred to its rival Laodicea. The theatre, the circus, and the baths had been shut, and this was perhaps the privation which the inhabitants felt most keenly. It was this circumstance which furnished John with the matter of his eighteenth homily, a subject to which he often returned later, in less tragic times.

Lastly, the other theme familiar to our orator, the vanity of worldly possessions, comes up again constantly in his discourses, whatever their subject may be.

The issue of the crisis was approaching. Flavian arrived at Constantinople shortly before Easter. This was—as Chrysostom has himself pointed out in the homily which contains his account of the old

[1] Homily xvii.

bishop's journey,[1] and the steps taken by him—an eminently favourable circumstance, well calculated to dispose Theodosius to clemency.[2] Flavian did indeed obtain the longed-for pardon, and returned bearing an imperial rescript drawn up to that effect. The twenty-first homily, which closes the series, is that which gives us information on these heads. John, who, as we have seen, was under all circumstances, at Antioch, the mouth-piece of his bishop, here again, as it were, puts himself in his place, and in describing the audience that Theodosius granted to him, he repeats after the event, for the benefit of his hearers, not without rhetoric, not without some verbosity, but with real emotion, the discourse to which it seems that the indulgence of the prince had been specially due.

The crisis of 387 is decisive in the history of Chrysostom's preaching. It was that which revealed to his public, and perhaps to himself, the power of his eloquence, and all the effort of which

[1] This is the homily which he pronounced on Easter Sunday, 387.

[2] Theodosius himself, John tells us, had recently published an edict, in which he ordered the release of the prisoners, in honour of the Easter festival, and Flavian recalled it to him in his speech. The account of all these events, as represented by John, ought to be compared with that of Libanius (vol. i., p. 151, Reiske's edition), and with that of Zosimus (iv. 41), which almost entirely suppress the part played by the monks and by Flavian. It is possible that Chrysostom, who at that time was not entirely detached from rhetoric, may have exaggerated this rôle; but what we know of the sentiments of Theodosius, leads us to believe that on the whole his account is, as a whole, nearer the actual facts than that of Libanius or Zosimus.

his zeal was capable; it was that which established between himself and his public, that sympathy which gave the one authority, henceforth, to say anything, and which inclined the other to hear everything. Therefore it was essentially important in its results. Even if considered merely in itself, it supplied Chrysostom with some of his finest bursts of oratory; but what is, without any doubt, more remarkable in this case, is not this eloquence, which, although unquestionably impassioned and brilliant, is still intermingled with a shade too much of formality; it is the fact that, from this date the orator is a past master in the tactics of his art, that he is sure of the influence which he exercises, and that consequently he regulates its effects, according to the needs of each day, mingling, even on the most tragic occasion with the pathos, which was the natural outcome of the actual state of things, the catechetical instruction which is to him always the essential point. Such, for the future, will Chrysostom be in his preaching, rising above the miseries of daily life, and trying to raise his hearers with him, so as to attach himself and them to the duties which this life daily imposes on us, without distinguishing between these duties, whether they are the simple and humble task common to all, or the more difficult sacrifices which are sometimes the portion of the few.

CHAPTER III

THE PREACHING OF CHRYSOSTOM AFTER 387—CHRYSOSTOM AND THE POOR—CHARITY—SLAVERY—THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY—PURITY OF MORALS—EDUCATION—GAMES AND SPECTACLES—RELIGION IN THE FAMILY AND ASCETICISM.

I

THE year 387 was, in a certain sense, the heroic period of Chrysostom's life; the years of his episcopate at Constantinople from the tragic part of it. Between the two, from 387 to 397, come ten peaceful years of incessant labour, more hidden, but not less fruitful. It is to my thinking, these years which best reveal to us what Chrysostom dreamt of and wished for. It is then that we can follow him in that delicate and difficult undertaking which had such attractions for him, and which was nothing less than a general reform of the morals of Christian society, a singularly bold effort to withstand the laxity which was creeping into it, and to bring men back as nearly as possible to the severity of the Gospel rule. The ardour which conceived this dream is not less admirable than the patience which strove to make it a reality.

"One man is enough, when he is on fire with zeal,

to reform a whole nation,"[1] he exclaimed as early as 387 in the first homily on the Statues, and at the end of his career at Constantinople he kept intact, if not all his ambitious hopes, at least his indefatigable activity. "If I asked you for money," he used then to say to his flock, "you would give it me, would you not? If I were in extreme danger you would give for me, if you could, a bit of your flesh. Well, think of the danger that I shall run if I am accused before God of not having succeeded in correcting you of your faults. Amend them in order that God may be merciful to me." And again, in a grand peroration belonging to the same period, he says: "If I were not afraid of being accused of vanity I would show you the interior of my dwelling, you would see my tears when I behold your falls, my joy when I perceive your progress. Would to heaven that you might be saved, and that I should be accused of having ill fulfilled my duty rather than that I should see you perish, and myself receive testimony that I had neglected no means of saving you." His increase in dignity made little difference to him. The bishop, quite as much as the simple priest, dwelt in intimate communion with his hearers, and his care and anxiety about great affairs nowise diminished his solicitude for the humblest of his flock: "I should like to know whether you listen to what I say to you with proper attention, lest I should be scattering the seed out-

[1] Ἀρκεῖ εἰς ἄνθρωπος ζήλῳ πεπυρωμένος ὁλόκηρον διορθώσασθαι δῆμον.

2. In Act. Apost. viii. 3. In Act. Apost. xliv.

side the furrow, for, if I were sure of your attention, my teaching would have more enthusiasm and joy about it. Certainly we shall speak, even if nobody listens to us, out of fear of the commands of the Lord: 'Preach to this nation,'" he says in effect, "and if they do not listen to thee, thou thyself shalt not be exempt from blame. If, however, I were convinced of your zeal and your diligence, I should not speak only through fear, but with joy. . . . Now, therefore, even if no one is listening to me, although I am exposed to no danger, because I am fulfilling my task, I nevertheless take it up without pleasure. . . . How, then, shall I ascertain whether you are getting any good from me? When I think that I notice some among you who are not attentive I shall go and see them privately and ask them questions. If I see that they have retained something of my words, I do not say all, I say only something of the whole, I shall suspect them no more. But I should have done better not to warn you, but to take you by surprise. And yet no! it will rejoice me if even after having warned you I attain my end. . . . But what am I saying? I can very well yet surprise you, in spite of everything, for I have warned you that I should ask questions, but I have not told you when. It will perhaps be to-day, perhaps to-morrow, and perhaps in twenty or thirty days, but perhaps also sooner or later. I shall regulate my conduct by the example of Providence, who for the same reason leaves the day of our death in uncertainty."[1] There

[1] In Ep. ad Heb. iv., *Exordium*.

is thus perfect unity in Chrysostom's preaching from his first beginnings up to the end, and the work that he attempted at Constantinople is only a beginning again in fresh circumstances and with different surroundings of what he had accomplished at Antioch. There is no difference between the two, except that Chrysostom, having become a bishop, and bishop of the capital of the Empire, no longer confined himself to reforming the morals of the faithful, but enters the lists against his clergy and against the court. Therefore we hope to be allowed, with the intent of displaying to its full extent, and in all its variety, this undertaking of the reform of morals, which is John's glory, not always to confine ourselves—though that is the more "excellent way" —to choosing our texts from the Antioch period, but occasionally to add to them analogous examples which date from Constantinople. In both towns he grappled with the same vices, and the same spirit inspired his preaching.

II

Chrysostom is, *par excellence*, the apostle of charity; and that is what gave him so much admiration and love for St Paul, from whom he differs very much in other respects. Amongst those who crowded to the church to hear his words, his special predilection was for the humble and simple, although he neglected no one. His invectives against riches are so strong, his zeal for the poor so passionate that he has often been represented—most incorrectly—as a sort of tribune proposing

and discussing social problems in the pulpit. But before examining into what is the real meaning of the ideas he expressed, let us look a little more closely at the distance which then separated the different classes of society, or at least at what he himself tells us on the subject.

In the first rank of the rich families of Antioch we meet with the municipal aristocracy, the members of the Senate (*βουλή*), whose high position at that time entailed, we must remember, very serious burdens, the undertaking of important public charges or expensive embassies, the enduring of every kind of responsibility. At Antioch, as everywhere else in the fourth century, people were more anxious to avoid than to solicit this sort of honour. The Senate, which at the beginning of the century was composed of 1200 members, diminished very much under Julian, who completed it, and appears to have numbered only about 60 towards 386, and still fewer after the sedition of 387.[1] But there was no lack of rich families outside the Senate-house.

Syria and Egypt were the two Eastern provinces in which trade and industry were the most active[2]; the Syrian merchants traversed the whole world, and were found even in Gaul; St Jerome calls them "the most covetous of men."[3] The manufacturies of linen or purple at Beyrout, Byblos, Tyre, and Laodicea, the trade in silk, which was carried

[1] See the two discourses of Libanius, the discourse *πρὸς τὴν βουλήν*, the discourse *ὑπερ τῶν βουλῶν*.

[2] See Mommsen, *Rœmische Geschichte*, v., p. 465.

[3] Ep. 130 (to Demetrias).

on mainly through their medium, were a constant source of fortune to them. If we are to judge by the expenses which the public charges entailed, and about which Libanius gives us some information, these fortunes must have been extremely large. At Constantinople, where the court resided, John was, as a matter of course, witness of still greater luxury.

What was at Antioch the relative proportion of rich and poor? According to the sixty-sixth of the homilies on St Matthew—this series includes some of those in which he has treated the question of luxury with the greatest zest—the rich and the poor formed in nearly equal divisions one-tenth of the population, the eight remaining tenths having incomes which were about sufficient. This is an interesting piece of information, as showing that the elements of a middle class were not lacking in the cities of the fourth century. But Chrysostom everywhere gives us the impression that the distance between the rich and the small burgesses in easy circumstances was immense, although we cannot in this case borrow exact figures from him.

I will not here quote the numerous passages in which he describes to us the luxury of great families, and gives us so many picturesque details about the manners of the times. I shall confine myself to stating that they all lead us to conclude that the patrimony of these families was immense, and that the luxury which they displayed was nearly as excessive as it had been in the first centuries of the empire. Christianity, without any doubt, had

succeeded in reforming the morals of a great number of private persons; it had not yet succeeded in transforming public morality.

As for the lower classes, Chrysostom has sometimes—less often, however, than we should like—given us bits of definite information about their precarious existence. As a rule he limits himself to extolling the virtues of those humble folk, whom he loves so dearly, shoemakers, smiths, artisans of all kinds.[1] One day, however, he informs us that among these workers who were freemen, not slaves, some few supported themselves, the others hired themselves to patrons who undertook their maintenance, and gave them only very moderate wages.[2] He does not speak frequently of the country inhabitants, for he had few opportunities of seeing them and addressing himself to them. Still, even if he has drawn a somewhat idyllic picture of their life[3] he has elsewhere described their miserable lot in terms of singular energy: "They work unintermittently all their lives, condemned to labour as arduous as that of asses and mules; their employers take no more care of their bodies than they would do of stones, they are allowed no breathing space, and whether their fields are productive or not, they are ground down all the same. Can we imagine misery greater than theirs when we see them at the end of the winter, which they have passed in the hardest work, exhausted by cold, rain and want of sleep, returning to their homes empty-handed and

[1] In Ep. ad Cor. xliii.
[2] *Ib.* ad Antioch xiv.
[3] *Ib.* xix.

even still in debt? They tremble before the punishments, the exactions of the overseers.[1]

Lastly, there was at Antioch a class of the common people, very wretched and very corrupt. I have already spoken of those habitués of the theatre and of the circus, to whom Chrysostom and Libanius attributed the sedition of 387. There were swarms of beggars who worked upon public charity with as much impudence as baseness.[2] From among them were recruited many thieves,[3] and serious crimes were not uncommon.[4]

Let us now try and see what is the import of Chrysostom's preaching when he is treating of that question which affected him so strongly, that of riches and luxury. And here it is of the utmost importance to make our statements precise, accurate, and at the same time full, for if we are to confine ourselves to some quotations from his most celebrated harangues against the rich, we should run the risk of distorting his ideas, as Amédée Thierry has done to a certain extent. To begin with, we must admit that in theory Chrysostom goes very far. Not merely does he attack with the utmost violence the morals of the rich people of his day, their hardness of heart, their avarice and so on, but he often in very plain terms declares himself in principle against the right of property, such as the larger number of those he is addressing understand

[1] In Matt. lvi. and lxi.
[2] In Ep. i. ad Cor. iii., in Ep. i. ad Thess. ii.
[3] De Virg. lxi. ad Stagirium iii.
[4] Montfaucon, vol. i., p. 215.

it. "All our evils," he will say, "come from those[1] cold words, mine and thine"—"Therefore, community of goods is more natural than property." "People do not quarrel about what is common to all—the sun, the water, the air. The world ought to be like the house of a man where all the slaves receive equal rations. All men are indeed equal since they are brothers." "What wonderful measures God has taken from the very beginning in order to instil into us the love which ought to unite us one to the other, the feeling of humanity. He gave us a common father, Adam. For why are we not born from the earth? why do we not come into the world fully formed adults, like Adam himself? No, it was necessary that we should be generated and brought forth by our parents; it was necessary that we should be born one from another, that we might be united by mutual affection."[2] That is the natural truth exactly as it ought to be set forth in contrast to the false distinction which social life establishes between us. And, moreover, what is the origin of great fortunes? Chrysostom does not hesitate to say that at their source there is always injustice or violence, and no one has more often developed the saying: *Omnis dives iniquus aut heres iniqui.* "You have inherited your patrimony; well and good. Therefore you have not sinned yourselves; but do you know that you are not benefiting by previous thefts and crimes?"[3] Then casting a glance around him

[1] In Ep. ad Tim. xii. [2] In Ep. ad Cor. xxxiv.
[3] In Ep. i. ad Tim. xii.

Chrysostom quotes facts and instances. By what means do we see people daily growing rich before our eyes? By small cheating in business,[1] by monopoly in years of bad crops,[2] by usury,[3] which is indiscriminately condemned by Chrysostom, who understood by this word not a really usurious rate, but the interest of the hundredth, *i.e.* one per cent. per month, or twelve per cent. per annum, which was the ordinary rate in his day.

All these extracts are exceedingly formal, and as I merely wish to extract the pith of them, I can only give my readers a glimpse of the way in which the indignant vehemence of expression is linked with the radical boldness of conception. Yes, but however radical these ideas may be they are always inoffensive, for Chrysostom does not come to the same conclusions as a tribune, and if he constantly recalls this primitive equality of men, it is in order to impose upon the rich, as their first duty, alms-giving; it is never to incite the poor to violent demands. Listen to him, in this same homily, whence I recently borrowed one[4] of the most characteristic passages. He has just held up the rich to execration, as "worse than wild beasts," relentless in despoiling widows and orphans, pitiless towards the weak and poor. Here he suddenly stops and apostrophises these wretched victims of insatiable cupidity: "Weep, yea, weep with me, not for yourselves, but for your plunderers, who are more unfortunate than

[1] In Ep. i. ad Thess. x.
[2] In Ep. i. ad Cor. xxxix.
[3] In Matt. lvi.
[4] In Ep. i. ad Tim. xii.

you." He excites them to pity and charity, not to anger.

What Chrysostom desires is not to stir up the poor against the rich—although I have no intention of denying that some of his most violent invectives may, contrary to his intention, have given rise to evil passions in the depths of certain hearts—but to convert the rich to charity, and to the practice of alms-giving. Of all the Fathers of the fourth century Chrysostom is *par excellence*, the panegyrist of alms-giving, and his eloquence is inexhaustible in making new this subject to which he returns so often. To give to the poor is to give to God, and John, before Bossuet, celebrated in magnificent oratory "the eminent dignity of the poor." Let us listen to him, when he puts words into the mouth of Christ, made incarnate anew, so to say, in a poor man: "Without doubt I could feed Myself, but I prefer to wander about as a beggar, to hold out My hand before thy door, in order to be fed by thee; it is for love of thee that I act thus. Therefore I love thy table, as thy friends love it; I take pride in being admitted to it, and I proclaim thy praises before the whole world, and point thee out to everyone as My foster-father."[1] And elsewhere: "What I am going to say is sad and horrible, nevertheless I must say it. Put God in the same rank as your slaves. You bequeath liberty to your slaves in your will; set Christ free from hunger, need, prison and nakedness. Ah! you shudder at my words!"[2] Is not the following passage both simple and

[1] In Ep. ad Rom. xvi. [2] *Ibid.* xviii.

forcible? "Charity is the greatest of graces. Let us practise it, and we shall not be inferior to Peter and Paul despite all their miracles."[1]

So much for general developments. But it is Chrysostom's custom never to confine himself to them; always to follow them up by definite advice. He makes it his study to teach all forms of almsgiving[2] from the most simple, such as to give to beggars in the street, to distribute the remains of one's meal, to give away one's old clothes, to have in the house a money-box, where the means for future charities will accumulate imperceptibly, up to others of a more special kind; to give gratuitous attendance, if one is a doctor, to intervene kindly and obligingly, if opportunity offers, between debtor and creditor.[3] Above all does he recommend the practice of hospitality, and we clearly perceive, without much surprise, that he did not succeed very well in introducing the practice of gratuitous entertainment, as was his desire.[4] In support of it he constantly quotes the example of the Biblical patriarchs, or the customs of the apostolic age. But his counsel was little heeded either at Antioch or Constantinople. The matter was left entirely, as were many other things, to the Church and the clergy. "How very few are hosts to their brethren! Everyone is aware, perhaps a little too well aware, that there exists a

[1] In Ep. ad Heb. iii.

[2] In Genes. xxxv. In Matt. lxiii., etc.

[3] In Act. Ap. xxv. He also often advises the faithful to make bequests to the Church. In Ep. ad Rom. xviii.

[4] In Genes. i. 43.

house for the public, belonging to the Church, known as the hospital. But, all the same, people ought to act for themselves. They should seat themselves at the town-gates and receive arrivals voluntarily; whereas, on the contrary, they rely entirely on the resources of the Church, forgetting that charity has a two-fold aim; it ought to profit the man who practises it as much as the man who receives it. The logical conclusion to be drawn from the reasoning of those who refuse to practise alms-giving themselves, in their own houses, would be that the laity should allow the priests to pray for the whole community, and give up prayer altogether themselves. And all the time you make no difficulty about boarding and lodging soldiers at the demand of the civil authority; but you will not do as much for the poor at the demand of Christ. Yet the poor are our defenders against the devils, just as the soldiers are against the barbarians. Therefore, let all of you have in your house a Xenodochium in proportion to your income; set apart in your dwelling one room for the guest, that is to say, for Christ. Entrust one of your servants—and do not be afraid of choosing the best for this office—with the task of receiving into it, and of waiting upon beggars and the sick. If not, if you refuse to make this sacrifice, if you will not let Lazarus sit by your family hearth, at least give him shelter in your stable. Yes, give Christ shelter in your stable. You shudder, it is much worse to shut the door [1] in His face."

It is easy, through the whole series of Chrysostom's

[1] In Act. Ap. xlvi.

homilies, whether they are dated from Constantinople or from Antioch, to follow the long war that he waged against the indifference of the rich. He discusses all their arguments, for he knows the customary objections made and brought to him as the people leave church. He is confronted with texts of Scripture, ill interpreted; thus, did not St Paul say to the inhabitants of Thessalonica: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat"? At the same time the result of daily experience and observation is urged against these poor, whom Chrysostom is constantly belauding. They deserve their fate is the unanimous cry of their wealthy brethren; they are lazy folk, unworthy of exciting any interest; they are impostors who simulate infirmities, mutilate their children, amass a fortune in secret, so that we find that a man to whom we had been giving alms for years was all the time lending out money clandestinely at a usurious rate. What real truth was there in these complaints? It is very likely that some exceptional facts were wilfully turned to their own profit by the accusing parties, but it is not impossible that the charity of the Church, which at that period was, to a steadily increasing extent, taking the place of imperial or municipal liberality, did support a few begging impostors, together with the deserving poor.

But Chrysostom knew that everything human has some defect, and he did not admit that because charity is sometimes liable to be deceived it ought to be discouraged and leave off working. Charity ought to shut her eyes and

open her hands. Does God ever say to us: Because you do not work I will no longer give you sunshine; because you do nothing useful I will put out the light of the moon, I will close up the bosom of the earth, I will shut up lakes, springs and rivers, and keep back the yearly rains? No, He always bestows His gifts with the same liberality; He showers them, not only upon the idle, but even on the wicked.[1] Admitting that there was, as I have said, some justice in certain objections made by Chrysostom's hearers, Chrysostom probably knew it, but also knew that an excessive egotism must be met by boundless charity.

After all these quotations it will, I trust, be easy to perceive the drift of this preaching. Some writers have been found in whom the name of Chrysostom awakens memories of the Gracchi, and who regard him as a kind of tribune; all that can be said is that their offence against good taste is as bad as their error of judgment. Despite some occasional language of extreme violence, there is nothing revolutionary about Chrysostom, save a certain tendency to utopianism. He never desires in any way to authorise the poor to claim their share of the goods of the rich; he wishes to convert the rich to the practice of charity; and he does so quite as much for the good of the rich as that of the poor. Let us bear in mind the speech I quoted some time ago: "Charity has a two-fold aim; it ought to profit the man who practises it as much as the man who receives it." What then is the ideal

[1] In Matt. xxxv.

set by Chrysostom before his hearers? It is not that everyone should be comfortable, it is that everyone should be poor. As to the poor themselves, he merely wishes that they should be sure of having enough to subsist upon; he does not demand for them easy circumstances or pleasure. With regard to the rich, he desires to induce them, not merely to furnish the poor with necessaries, but to strip themselves, or at the very least to detach themselves from their goods, and live in the midst of riches with the habits of poverty. His ideal, therefore, is still monastic (or rather, since from the time when he received successively the diaconate and the priesthood, he left solitude and devoted himself to the evangelisation of towns, he admitted the idea of family life, and did not require celibacy of the faithful); we should call it an evangelical ideal, such as is set before us in a celebrated chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Given the realisation of this ideal, we may say without paradox—and Chrysostom himself did say so—that the essential profit will be less for the poor, who will not be enriched, than for the rich, who will have been sanctified by charity.

Therefore, if we look below the surface, there is no real connection between this preaching and certain political movements of Greco-Latin antiquity, or certain theories of our own days. The only link that can possibly be forged between Chrysostom, and ancient tribunes, or modern socialists, is, I say once more, that natural tendency towards utopianism, which is undoubtedly an essential attribute of every great reformer. As-

suredly, speaking generally, Chrysostom is perfectly convinced that he shall never bring back society in the fourth century to that community of goods, which the Church of Jerusalem, as described by St Luke, practised for a certain period. Nevertheless, on occasion, not merely does he give it to be understood that such is his cherished dream, but he finally becomes carried away to the pitch of believing that this dream is not entirely beyond hope of realisation. Thus, in the 34th homily on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, drawing inspiration from a celebrated passage of Plato, he conceives the bold hypothesis of two towns, one entirely composed of rich, the other of poor, and he strives to demonstrate, by rigorous argument, that the first will from the very outset be condemned to impotence and destruction, whilst nothing will hinder the town of the poor from enduring. The same inspiration dictated to him in his homilies on the Acts, the commentary on the chapter whence he took his ideal. As the Abbé Fleury, a man of most accurate judgment, puts it, he presents to his contemporaries that Jerusalem community, not as a temporary and exceptional phenomenon, but as a reality, which would still be possible if it were not opposed by egotism. And indeed each time that he spoke thus he was thinking of something very real, he was thinking of monastic life. "Those who live in the world, except for marriage, and despite of marriage, ought to resemble monks in everything else," he said one day.[1] Why

[1] In Ep. ad Heb. vii.

then should not the world become, little by little, a great monastery? This at least, from time to time, did not seem to John quite a chimerical notion; in any case it was the dream which brought refreshment to his mind, fed the ardour of his heart, and supplied his moral nature with the necessary strength for courageously pursuing his great work, once he had undertaken it. Certainly it was a Utopia, but a Utopia of peace and love, of sacrifice and poverty.

III

Another circumstance tending to show—if there were any need for dwelling further on the subject—how far Chrysostom is from being imbued with any revolutionary spirit, is the list which might be made of the passages in which he has spoken of slavery. Like all his contemporaries, it is difficult for Chrysostom to imagine that slavery can possibly be suppressed. Certainly he does not approve of it, but he tolerates it, seldom attempting to do more than improve existing conditions.

Before studying the advice which he gives to masters and slaves with regard to their mutual relations, let us look into the somewhat contradictory tendencies which are manifested to us by some of his disquisitions on the fundamental question. We find him, in various passages, asking himself what is the origin of the institution of slavery, and he tells us at the same time that his hearers often asked themselves this question.[1] First of all he seeks a solution in scripture, and the text of Genesis (ix. 25),

[1] *De Lazaro I.* In Ep. ad Eph. xxii.

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren," which easily supplied him with one, is certainly one of the causes which hindered him from speaking out more plainly. But, on the other hand, that keen feeling of equality amongst men,[1] which he also drew from the Scriptures, his humane and generous instincts, in some degree also the influence of certain ideas derived from ancient philosophy, often induce him to put aside exegesis and to maintain that nothing but covetousness and avarice have permitted the establishment of slavery and explain its continuation. He observes that in fact, even after the commission of original sin, the first men, Abel, Seth and Noe, passed their lives without knowledge of slavery.[2] In short, servitude is not *natural*[3]; it is a human institution created by our vices. Therefore it would be possible to suppress it; and once at least, as an exceptional occurrence, Chrysostom went to the extreme limits of existing prejudice, and reducing the question within very narrow bounds, sought to inquire whether there were no practical means of abolishing slavery, or at least of putting some restraint on it. The rich have thousands of slaves, and yet, after all, how very few would suffice for a free man, if he knew how to be satisfied with what is necessary. One would be enough, two or three at most; several masters might even be content with one slave among

[1] See the passages I have quoted in the preceding paragraph.

[2] In Ep. ad Eph. xxii. Against these examples John's hearers alleged that of Abraham.

[3] In Ep. i. ad Tim. xvi.

them. As for the others, as for all those superfluous servants who are become a necessity to us merely through our own vices, you ought to make them *learn a trade* in order to render them capable of gaining their own living, and then set them free.[1] But it must be owned that this passage stands alone, and, moreover, Chrysostom plainly lets us see, in the course of his homily, how difficult it was for him to hold his audience in check, when he used language that was, for those days, very bold. After having uttered the words which I have just quoted, he suddenly stops with the exclamation: "I feel that I am making you angry!" He likewise protests that he will not be forced to hold his peace, but some murmurs catch his ear, or he perceives tokens of sullen resistance in the attitude of the crowd, and he thinks it well not to say any more about it that day. Nor, so far as I know, did he repeat the attempt on any other occasion; more often he contents himself with another means of settling the difficulty. He seeks to satisfy the needs of his conscience by repeating to himself that in Jesus Christ at least no one is a slave, and that God is no accepter of persons. "Yes, such is the greatness of Christianity, that even in slavery it brings about the birth of liberty."[2] And it is for that reason that St Paul bids the slave remain a slave.

What really in the main guided Chrysostom's opinion, what constitutes the authority which he invokes, is the Epistle to Philemon, and it is in

[1] In Ep. i. ad Cor. xl.

[2] In Ep. i. ad Cor. xix.

the remarkable commentary on it, composed by him, that we find the clearest expression of his ideas.[1] It is easy to gather from its pages how unhappy was still the lot of the slave, and how many efforts Chrysostom made to improve it. Doubtless many slaves are undisciplined, grumbling, and vicious.[2] "Doubtless also," said the orator, adopting a comparison familiar to people in ancient days, "the father of a family is king in his own house, and governs his home circle as an absolute sovereign.[3] But that is just the reason why he ought to use his power gently." Now, in reality, if we are to believe Chrysostom, the slave is treated very brutally, and beaten on the slightest pretext.[4] During his episcopate at Constantinople John even degraded one of his deacons, who had been guilty of an action of this kind, which fact was one of the complaints brought against him at the Council of the Oak. Worse than all the soul of the slave is still more in danger than his body, no one respects his moral personality. It is not enough to give him in marriage to sell him against his inclination. The female slave is constantly the victim of her master's lust.

This is, indeed, the principal danger which Chrysostom fears from the masters; whilst from the mistresses his special fear is cruelty. How often does it happen, that from inside a house the passers-by hear the screams of fury from the

[1] Principally in the second homily. [2] Ad Ant. xiii.; ad. vid. jun. i.
[3] In Ep. ad Eph. xxii. [4] Ad Ant. xiv.

mistress, and the cries of pain from the servant, penetrating to the street.[1] And the orator goes on to sketch the portrait of the virago, who, calling her husband to her help, has the poor slave undressed, tied to the foot of the bed, and mercilessly beaten. John does not absolutely condemn corporal punishment; he recognises that in certain cases it may be necessary. "What!" you will say; "we are not to be allowed to strike a slave?" I do not say that, for it is sometimes necessary, but not constantly, nor excessively.[2] And, above all —this is truly a Christian restriction—employers must not punish for any selfish reason, nor for faults committed in the work, but in the interest of the slave himself, when it is a question of correcting his vices.

But, on the other hand, Chrysostom preaches to the slaves their duties towards their masters, no less than to the masters their duties towards their slaves. There is complete reciprocity; one has the right to be well served, as the other has to be well treated.[3] We must also say a word about the part that he hopes to see played, in the families which are still heathen, by the Christian slaves. He believes that they may still be, as had often been the case in the period prior to the triumph of the Church, the most trustworthy agents in bringing about conversions. "Many families have obtained the greatest profit from the virtue of their slaves; the master himself has been influenced by the good example coming from

[1] In Ep. ad Eph. xv. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

those beneath him. This is particularly the case when this treasure of a virtuous slave is in a heathen household. If a pagan sees his slave more honest, more willing and industrious, more charitable, more chaste than those boasted philosophers, and if he learns that this slave is a Christian, nothing can be more calculated to touch him; nothing will more astonish and more surely win over to Christianity those men who are always bewailing the insubordination of their slaves."[1]

IV

We have seen, when studying Chrysostom's preaching on almsgiving, what influence the ideal of monastic life exercised over him long years after he had left the solitude of the mountains. His whole endeavour tends towards bringing, difficult as the attempt may seem, the morals and ways of life of the society, in the midst of which he has again come to dwell, as close as possible to those of the communities where he formerly lived. We shall have often to repeat these remarks, now that we are studying his views on the constitution of a family. On one essential point we shall perceive the great transformation which time and fresh surroundings and associations had undoubtedly worked in him, but in many others, and in his characteristics and opinions taken as a whole, we shall again notice

[1] In Ep. ii. ad Thess. v.

the bond which joins the different periods of his career, and gives harmony to his life.

In one point, I repeat, Chrysostom has perceptibly modified his ideas. We recollect the passionate tone which distinguishes one of his first works, the treatise on Virginity, and the severity with which he then regarded marriage. After having received the priesthood, and when the exercise of his ministry, and the daily direction of the faithful, had given him more experience, John certainly made no essential change in his thesis, but he no longer expressed himself with the same bluntness.

When he preached before an audience almost entirely composed of married people, he was careful thenceforth not to depreciate marriage; he was at least more awake to its relative value, which he had, let it be remembered, pointed out, even in the treatise on Virginity. "Marriage is good, because it keeps a man within the bounds of duty, and preserves him from fornication." He no longer drew pictures of unhappy households, seeming at the same time to insinuate that such was the lot common to all; if he sketched it again, it was in order to inspire the faithful with horror for it, and to incite them to mutual love and concord. And as a contrast, he showed them that beautiful representation of the Christian family which closes his 38th homily on Genesis. When he brought forward again, this time in order to strengthen his own argument, quite forgetting the 25th chapter of his treatise,[1] the example of Abraham, which his opponents then

[1] *De Virgin*, xxv.

brought up against him, when he thought it a good thing that the mother of the Machabees had been married since she gave birth to heroes,[1] when he extolled the perfect union of Aquila and Priscilla,[2] when he recalled the fact that Peter was married, and asserted *on his salvation* that the married state is in no way harmful to Christian life,[3] he was not quite the same person as when he wrote these words: "Since conjugal union takes away from us the free disposal of ourselves, who would not revolt against such a tyrannical law?"[4]

Let us now go on to the special recommendations given by Chrysostom in order to ensure a well-organised family. Since the first object of marriage is, according to him, to check concupiscence, he usually advises young men to marry as soon as possible, and he continually strives to refute the selfish reasoning which causes most marriages to be deferred so long.[5] It is the parents' duty, when the proper time arrives, to seek out a suitable bride for their son, and to accustom him from his early youth to desire not so much that she should be very rich, as that she should be endowed with virtues. Even at an earlier date, in the treatise on Virginity,[6] he had condemned a marriage for money with the utmost severity; he constantly returns to it in his homilies. Nothing shocks him like that word *contract* (συνάλλαγμα) which is given to marriage, and indeed is very characteristic of it,

[1] In illud: vidi Dominum, iv.
[2] lxxiii. in Matt.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *De Virgin*, xxviii.
[5] In Matt. lxix.
[6] Cap. liii. and dxcix.

as it is now conducted.[1] Instead of giving ourself so much trouble about drawing up clauses, and constantly consulting lawyers, it would be better to follow the advice of St Paul, to imitate the example of Abraham.[2]

We may question whether John had much success, when he again and again repeated this kind of counsel; he was undertaking a more practical work, and it is probable that he obtained more result, when he strove to expurgate the marriage ceremonies from all the pagan and more or less licentious customs which they still included. In particular he did his utmost to induce his flock to suppress the use of the πομπή, according to the Greek term, the *deductio sponsæ*, according to the Roman phrase, that is to say, the cortège, which called for the bride at her father's house, and escorted her at nightfall to the house of her husband. Nor did he labour less strenuously to effect the disappearance of the banquet which followed, and which, mingled as it was with songs, dances and dramatic interludes, seemed to sanction great licensè in the guests, and furnished a pretext for introducing into the conjugal dwelling actors and dancing girls. But the inhabitants of Antioch made a great point of these ceremonies, which had been handed down from their ancestors; it hardly seemed possible to them that a marriage at which they had not been observed could be valid. Still, although Chrysostom might meet with resistance, it must none the less have been evident to the greater number of his flock

[1] In Matt. lxxiii. [2] In Gen. xlviii.

that these customs were absolutely irreconcilable with Christianity, and we may suppose that the pains he took to get rid of them were not entirely thrown away.

Once a marriage was celebrated, still more serious abuses called forth his criticism. Even in Christian society divorce was increasingly frequent, often for futile reasons, and new unions were entered into after the contracting parties had been widows or widowers several times. The orator constantly reminds them of the law which absolutely forbids the husband to put away his wife, save in case of adultery.[1] As for second marriages he recommends avoidance of them, but knowing the frailty of human nature, he tolerates them. On this subject also he confines himself almost entirely to reproducing, with appropriate comments, the precepts of St Paul.

But Chrysostom's chief anxiety, when he speaks of marriage, is to thoroughly establish the perfect equality of husband and wife; for it cost him more trouble than anything else to convince his audience of this truth. When we see how persistently he repeats that the infidelity of man is as reprehensible as that of woman, we easily perceive that the greater number of his hearers were difficult to convert on this head. And not only at Constantinople, but perhaps still more at Antioch, in that town of pleasure which supplied Rome with a good proportion of her flute-players and her courtesans, faults against morals were not taken much into account. John has told us certain characteristic

[1] In Matt. xvii.; *ibid.* lxii.; *De libello repudii.*

anecdotes, certain curious instances. We will mention one, that of the family of the unhappy Stagirius, to whom he addressed the consolations which we have already studied. The father, a man of high birth and of great wealth, had abandoned his legitimate wife, and lived openly with a mistress, by whom he had several children.[1] If John does not, in preaching, make use of quite such direct personalities, it is obvious from all his homilies that the case was far from being rare, and that the evil was great.

Whilst Chrysostom is thus laying down, as a principle, the strict equality between husband and wife, he endeavours, with an infinite amount of good sense, to assign to each of them his and her proper part. "God has not allowed man and woman to do everything indiscriminately; he has divided their task. The house belongs to the woman, the agora to the man. It is the man's duty to maintain his family by the cultivation of land; the woman's to clothe them by weaving."[2] Then he shows how order reigns in a family where husband and wife alike accurately fulfil their obligations; how the wife, when she confines herself to her own, thereby obtains little by little more influence over her husband, and may unwittingly improve his character.[3] On the other hand, he explains, thus showing himself a moralist of great *finesse*, how the husband may work upon the wife, if she is anything of a coquette, or at all inclined to be extravagant, and

[1] To Stagirius ii. [2] In Ep. ad Cor. xxxiv.

[3] Advice is usually unpalatable, except that given by a woman which has a peculiar and unique charm on account of the love she inspires (In Joan. lxi.)

even cure her, by praising, in order to create or develop them in her, the very qualities which she lacks, or of which she has only the germ.[1]

Not only over her husband may the wife exercise a salutary influence; to her especially belongs one of the most essential duties—the early education of the children. John himself, left fatherless at a tender age, had been brought up by Anthusa; it is therefore natural that he should rely to a great extent upon mothers. He does not seem, on the other hand, to ground much hope on the fathers, whether because he thinks that their occupations absorb them too much, and that they are only too willing to let their responsibility devolve upon a tutor; whether he fancies that, being more preoccupied with the necessities of life, they are tempted to sacrifice religious education in some measure to secular education. It is the privilege of mothers to bring up their young children, to imprint virtue and good habits on their souls whilst they are still pliant and impressionable; and John regards this privilege as so important, that, in his opinion, family ties are formed less by community of blood than by careful fulfilment of mutual duties. "The fact that children have a natural feeling of affection towards their parents is the work of Divine Providence; and so is it, on the other hand, that the wellbeing of the family does not rest entirely upon this sentiment."[2] And St Paul praised the mother not for bringing children into the world, but for bringing them up.[3]

I have already said, when speaking of Chrysos-

[1] In Ep. ad Eph. xx. [2] In Annam i. [3] In Tim. v. 10.

tom's youth, that he had received the most careful classical education, but that in later life he had retained very little gratitude towards his old masters.[1] The clear recollection, the sunny memories of his stay at Athens, which dwelt always with St Gregory Nazianzen, had no parallel in Chrysostom; he forgot the time when rhetoric had allurements for him; he never troubled himself, like St Basil, to make up his mind to what extent the study of heathen authors might be introduced into Christian education. It is useless to seek information on this kind of question from him; we shall find, on the contrary, that his whole attention is taken up with moral education. His "daily instance" is to thoroughly reform the family, to make the home healthy and pure, to secure, what Quintilian had pleaded for, what Juvenal in some of the most beautiful lines that he ever wrote, had demanded as a right, that no evil example should ever corrupt a child, that he should never even hear an unbecoming word, to induce fathers and mothers not merely to watch themselves in this particular, but to keep an eye upon the servants around them. "We often advise a servant who requires a lamp not to carry it into a room where there is straw or any inflammable material, for fear that, unknown to us, a spark may happen to fall upon it, and, igniting it, set fire to the house. Therefore, let us show the same forethought with regard to our children; let us not suffer their eyes to rest upon any place

[1] He never mentions Libanius; and when he alludes to him it is with perfect indifference.

where they may see bold and shameless servant-maids, girls who will incite them to evil, impudent slaves; let us give them strict injunctions on this head. If by chance we have a servant or a neighbour of this kind, or if in any way whatever this danger is near us, let us take care that they shall not be exposed to it, either by sight or conversation, for fear that so the spark may set the whole soul on fire, and make a fall inevitable. Let us keep far from them, likewise, loose and indecent words, for fear they should be led away by them as by a magic spell. Let us take them neither to the theatre, nor to banquets, where the guests become intoxicated; but let us guard young men with even more care than young girls, who are confined to the gynæceum,[1] for youth has no more beautiful ornament than the crown of temperance, and the glory of presenting itself at marriage pure and free from dissipation." [2]

To complete this truly Christian education, which is best and most surely guaranteed by the good examples set in the home-circle, Chrysostom, at the time when he wrote his *Apology for Monastic Life* [3] —that is to say, in one of his first works—gave a piece of advice which deserves mention: he wished young men to be sent, before they were allowed to enter upon active life, to make a sort of retreat in a monastery. He even informs us that this was not without precedent; it is a custom that he wishes, not to introduce for the first time, but to make more common. Did he recognise later on that all the same it was difficult to render it general? As a

[1] The apartment reserved for women. [2] In Annam i. [3] Book iii.

matter of fact he does not repeat this suggestion in any of his homilies.

Lastly, before closing this account of the advice given by Chrysostom to fathers and mothers in order to keep up in their families a high standard of morality and strictly Christian habits, since we have seen how he strove to reform marriage ceremonies, let us now watch him undertaking the same task in what concerns funeral ceremonies. At that solemn moment, at that hour in which we ought to show by our demeanour that[1] "Christianity is not a mere jest or childishness," John strives to repress an excess of too demonstrative grief. "I do not forbid sorrow, but the violence of sorrow."[2] He makes all the more point of this, because he knows that the pagans are fond of maliciously watching the Christians in order to try and surprise them acting in contradiction to the hopes which their faith ought to inspire in them. "We weep, and the heathens say: But what, then, is the good of this doctrine of the resurrection which they always have on their lips? They are only boasting and deceiving us when they pretend to believe in this mad dream."[3] What, then, were the signs of mourning which Chrysostom especially forbade? He allowed, according to custom, the enveloping of the dead in rich new materials and white cloths impregnated with perfumes, a kind of symbol of the immortal garment which is to clothe the purified and glorious flesh after the resurrection;[4] he was willing that torches and

[1] In Joannem lxii. [2] From *De Dormientibus*.
[3] *Ibid.* [4] In Gen. lxvi.

tapers should be borne in the funeral procession; he advised its being accompanied by the singing of psalms.[1] But he was not much inclined to tolerate black garments. He specially condemned in women noisy and ill regulated manifestation of sorrow.[2] Still more did he forbid the profane custom, which many Eastern Christians still observed, of bringing hired mourners to the funeral. It appears that he witnessed this abuse at Constantinople even more than at Antioch; he went so far as to threaten with excommunication those who would not amend in this matter.[3]

V

Without having ever been perhaps as passionately fond of plays and shows as St Augustine, Chrysostom owns that he had liked the theatre during his youth. Later on at Antioch, and likewise at Constantinople, where the infatuation of people for the theatre perhaps exceeded that of Rome, he amply atoned for the error of which he accused himself by the ardour and constancy with which he waged war against public games.

To begin with, Chrysostom is one of those who do not even admit in principle that dramatic art can possibly be reconciled with the purity of morals which ought to prevail in Christian society. He considers that every representation of human passions is dangerous, and that it tends to give life to those passions rather than to "purge the

[1] In Ep. ad Heb. iv. [2] *De Dormientibus.*
[3] In Ep. ad Heb. iv.

soul." Therefore it is easy to see with what severity he naturally judges the stage of his own day, the decadence and the immorality of which are undeniable. Classical comedy and tragedy, which, be it observed, he would not have viewed more leniently, were no longer played; nothing was to be seen but farces and pantomimes, and this sort of piece had continued to be exactly similar to those of the Latin theatre in the first centuries of the empire, as we are acquainted with it mainly through the verses of Juvenal and Martial. The subject of the farces was nearly always adultery; the intrigue was enlivened by the grossest jokes, and by the grotesque *rôle* of the Stupidus, who was pursued with blows and boxes on the ear.[1] The people of Antioch were equally crazed about music; they were very fond of the *cantica*, the subject of which was taken from the old legends of mythological love, and the music was languishing and sensual.[2] The *mise-en-scène* was, as a rule, very luxurious. The female parts were sometimes acted by women very lightly clad, sometimes by men, whom John despises equally.[3] Thus a vulgar farce, or a kind of ballet or set of lyrical scenes no less indecent, were the only two kinds of dramatic entertainment in vogue. Let us add that at the theatre, as also at banquets, buffoons, minstrels, jugglers, rope-dancers, often appeared.

The circus was not less popular, and in Syria particularly horse-races were much in fashion. It used to be said that the best actors came from Tyre

[1] In Matt. vi.; *Ibid.* xxxvii. [2] In Ep. ad Thess. v.
[3] *Ibid.* De David et Saul, iii.

or Beyrout, and the best dancers from Cesarea; the most famous coachmen came from Laodicea. When the great men of Antioch had to bear the expense of a public charge, they did not content themselves with the resources offered by their own country; they sent for picked teams from the most distant countries—from Spain, for instance.[1] To make our account complete let us add that there were also Olympian games at Antioch, and that the fights of wild beasts or even of gladiators, without being as popular as in the West, were not a very unusual occurrence.

It is impossible to say whether the inhabitants of Antioch or of Constantinople were the more enamoured of these spectacles. At Antioch, on the day of a performance, not only were the seats of the circus filled, but the roofs of the[2] neighbouring houses were crowded with spectators. The games lasted a very long time, not an hour or two, but the greater part of the day; the patience of the spectators was indefatigable, and neither the heat of summer nor the inclemency of autumn induced them to listen to the persuasive voice of Chrysostom, saying that they would be better off under the beautiful ceiling of the "golden church, which is both cool in summer and warm in winter."[3] In the East, as at Rome, they were split into parties, who, on the evening of the day before the race, met together, and next morning went to the circus in compact groups. The names of the drivers, the

[1] Symmachus Ep. iv., lxii.
[2] In Annam iv.
[3] In Joannem lviii.

actors and actresses, were known to everyone. People were as well acquainted with the genealogy of the famous horses as they are to-day, and discussed and calculated in much the same manner their chances of success.[1] The athletes were also popular, and they were not regarded as disreputable people, like the actors, with whose popularity was mingled a strong mixture of contempt. Lastly, round this set of dancers and dancing girls, of actors and actresses, hovered that crowd of parasites and lickspittles, who were always to the front in seditions, and who seem to have played the first part in that of 387; they numbered, according to Libanius,[2] at least four hundred.

All the great bishops of this period waged war against these spectacles, none with more vehemence and more persistence than Chrysostom. From the very first year of his preaching at Antioch, he sets to work; all through the most busy years of his episcopate at Constantinople his zeal has not abated. When a simple priest we hear him declaring that he shall not hesitate to take rigorous measures; as a bishop, we see him once pronounce sentence of excommunication against those who transgress his orders.

These turbulent spirits were numerous; they argued with Chrysostom; they made game of him: "What harm is there in seeing horses race. Whom will you induce to believe that such shows entail our running the danger of damnation.[3] And in the

[1] In Priscill. et Aqu. i. [2] Against Timocrates.
[3] In Genesim vi.

same way what harm is there in going to amuse oneself one day at some farce or pantomine? Besides, the spectacles are regulated by law, presided over by officials; the emperor and the court are present at them." Such are the ironical arguments which Chrysostom was constantly hearing. He did not reply in the same tone; on the contrary, there is no other subject on which he sooner gets heated, or is more carried away by excitement. He explains that the frequentation of the theatre has two inevitable consequences, ennui and debauchery. You pass a few hours in an ideal world, unnaturally beautiful, and when you come home you begin, without any apparent cause, to suffer from ennui. You are dissatisfied with your unpretending house, because you have in your mind the splendour of the *mise-en-scène*; with your wife, because she is less beautiful and less elegantly dressed than the actress or dancer that you have just been applauding, and everyone round you suffers from your bad temper.[1] You bring back from the spectacle impure scenes, which dwell in your soul, which stimulate all your sensual passions till it would be better that you really had before you the actress or the courtesan; your wife would soon have succeeded in driving her out, whilst she is powerless against the memories which beset you, and which you try to hide. As his hearers protested, accused him of exaggeration, declared that they went to the theatre without evil intention, and left it without

[1] I am putting briefly the main part of the homily on the spectacles, preached by John in 399.

any evil thought (John sometimes made some concessions). "Very well, I will admit that you yourselves went to the theatre without having felt any movement of concupiscence; I will admit that you have enough control over yourselves to have nothing to fear. But can you answer for your neighbour, and if you cannot, are you not always guilty of grave sin in patronising what causes the loss of so many souls?"[1] Sometimes, on the contrary, he drove them to their farthest entrenchments. Here is one of his boldest oratorical periods. He begins by describing, with a realism which reminds us of the style of a satirist rather than of a sacred orator, the immodest dress of the actresses and all their courtesans' tricks. Then suddenly interrupting himself, he exclaims, "Did you feel nothing at all whilst I was speaking. Nay, do not blush and do not be ashamed, for it is a demand which nature makes on you. But if, when listening here to me, a priest, you have not been able to master yourselves, how is it with you at the theatre? Will you again dare to say that when there you remain cold as marble?"[2]

We see thus that John, as was natural, reserved his most vehement invectives for the theatre. Not that the games in the circus met with a more lenient judgment from him, be it observed. In condemning them, he was acting in conformity with the old tradition of the Church, which forbade all plays and spectacles as being tainted with idolatry; this tradition had in some measure created a kind of prejudice,

[1] In Matt. xxxvii. [2] In Joannem xviii.

which still endured though the empire had become Christian. Moreover, he greatly deplored the incessant disturbances originating in the divisions of the public into factions, and in his discourses ceaselessly returned to this point, that the circus, no less than the theatre, was the rendezvous of all people of bad morals, and that others frequenting it were almost imperceptibly affected by the corruption of their surroundings. Finally it was a peculiar grief to Chrysostom that the games in the circus, equally with dramatic representations, were in a certain sense rivals to the Church; they took away his congregation, and were the commonest reason for the absence from divine office which so often excited his wrath. Some arrangements had indeed been made at this period by the law to hinder the public festivals and religious festivals from coming on the same day; but they were incomplete, and, moreover, ill-observed. In the very beginning of his ministry, when he was delivering, at first with great success, his homilies against the Anomeans, Chrysostom on the seventh day was compelled to recognise that his audience had considerably diminished, because there were races in the city. A like mischance often happened to him in the future.[1] The most striking instance is made known to us by the beautiful homily, from which I have already borrowed several passages, which he preached at Constantinople in 399, at a time when persistent rain had nearly ruined the harvest, and he had organised public prayers and a pilgrimage to

[1] See, for example, the 6th Homily on Genesis.

the church of St Peter and St Paul; in the midst of these ceremonies, on a Friday, there were equestrian games at the circus, and the crowd flocked to them.[1] On the following Sunday, Chrysostom, whose indignation had been roused by this frivolity, delivered one of the most vehement sermons that have come down to us from him.

John is fond of contrasting the example of the Barbarians with this immoderate passion, to which the inhabitants of Antioch, as well as those of Constantinople, gave way; he quotes with approval the speech attributed to a Gothic chief: "It seems that the Romans have neither wives nor children, and that they have been compelled to go and seek for amusement outside their homes." But it doubtless happened on more than one occasion that the Barbarians, once established in the empire, became quite as fond of spectacles as the Romans; it happened more seldom that Chrysostom converted any of his flock. Before Chrysostom's preaching, and after it, Antioch continued to be the city *par excellence* of dancers and actors; Constantinople frequently beheld the renewal of the disturbances, stirred up by the factions of the circus, and did not cease to applaud the shameless actresses who preceded Theodora.

VI

It is not enough that Chrysostom's perfect and ideal Christian should be married early, observe

[1] It may even have been Good Friday.

strict purity of morals, bring up his children in piety and virtue, abstain from all disgraceful amusements and all immodest spectacles, conform to the rules of the most rigid morality; he must also be well instructed in the truths of religion, and avoid all those compromises with Hellenism or heresies to which the indifferent or ignorant multitude so easily yields. Society in the fourth century was indeed one of the most divided which has ever existed, and at the same time, for that very reason, one of those in which impressions and influence were most easily and imperceptibly transmitted from one group or "set" to another, despite their apparent hostility. In the great Eastern cities especially, pagans, Jews, heretics of all sorts, and Christians, were constantly in close contact, and acted upon one another. In the Catholic community, generally composed, not as in earlier days, of a band of the best citizens who had embraced the Gospel at a mature age, but of Christians by birth, laxity was more common, and a routine religion crept in; the multitude was open to every impression, and let itself be carried away by every current.

One is surprised in reading Chrysostom, at the ignorance of the greater part of the faithful concerning their religion. We have seen that nearly all the homilies he preached are clothed in the same form; that of a commentary on the Old or New Testament. He certainly introduces into each, besides various digressions, a piece of moral teaching suitable to the text of which he is mak-

ing the exegesis; but he also clearly intends to make his congregation acquainted with the Scripture, which they do not know, and to explain its meaning to them,[1] a *Scrutamini Scripturas*, he frequently repeated with the evangelist; and he announced beforehand the text on which he was going to preach; he wished that after the sermon the father of the family should go over it with his household, making a *resumé* of what he had best taken in of the commentary he had heard. According to Photius, John had thus explained, either at Antioch or Constantinople, all the Old and all the New Testament; in any case, the series of homilies which treat of Genesis, of the Gospel according to St Matthew, of the Gospel according to St John, and of the Epistles of St Paul, are particularly important. John's method of interpretation is simple, familiar, following the historic sense, according to the tradition of Diodorus, more than the allegoric exegesis, and full of *finesse* and observation, showing how delicate, and at the same time, how penetrating was his moral perception.

Among the heresies which, more or less directly, had some influence on the state of mind of the faithful, may be mentioned Marcionism and Manichæanism; many persons, though they were perhaps scarcely themselves conscious of it, had a strong inclination to dualism. The belief in the incessant action of demons, by which all kinds of events were interpreted, predisposed their minds to

[1] In Joannem xxxix.; in Gen. xxi.; in Joannem, xlvii.; in Act. Ap. i.

singular superstitions.[1] John warned his hearers against these excesses. Neither did he like their reducing in a certain sense all religion to faith in miracles. "Tell me, if anyone gave you the choice between awakening the dead in the name of Christ, or of dying for His Name, which would you prefer? Would you not choose martyrdom? Now, the first thing is a sign, the second a deed. If anyone gave you the choice between changing straw into gold, and trampling all riches under foot like straw, would you not choose the second privilege? And most certainly you would be right. For the first would undoubtedly lead all men away; if they saw the straw becoming gold, they would all wish to obtain this power, like Simon Magus, and the love of riches would simply increase. If, on the other hand, everyone despised gold as if it were straw, evil would have disappeared from the world long ago. What is it that really constitutes our life, signs or good conduct? Certainly good conduct."[2] Neither did he attach exaggerated value to pilgrimages, which at that time drew so many people to Palestine, Egypt, and other places. He did not condemn them; he contented himself with declaring that faith must not be reduced to manifestations of this kind.

The town of Antioch was Christian in the majority, but pagans were still numerous there. It was the

[1] *Cf.* for instance in Matt. xxviii. *De Lazaro*, II., and the homilies on the Demons, which date from the first years of Chrysostom's preaching.

[2] In Matt. xlvi.

same thing at Constantinople. Many pagan customs were not easily uprooted. I have already spoken of wedding and funeral rites. Many Christians were likewise detached with great difficulty from belief in auguries and portents, from the observance of lucky and unlucky days, of a quantity of magical practices[1] (amulets, formulas for calling up spirits, bewitching people, and the like). Astrology still numbered a great many adepts, who were, be it observed, closely watched by the imperial police. John was particularly severe with respect to them, for no doctrine was to him more odious than fatalism, and free-will always found in him an ardent defender.

The Jews were tolerably numerous at Constantinople, but they were much more so at Antioch, where their influence was very great. There, the Christians despised them, as the nation stained with the blood of Christ, and yet at the same time respected them as the first guardians of Divine truth. Therefore it was no unusual occurrence for some of the faithful to celebrate Jewish festivals, to go to the synagogues,[2] to place great confidence in the magical practices of the Jews, to imagine that oaths taken through their instrumentality had a special value.[3] "The Jews intimidate you, as though you were children," Chrysostom said one day, at the end of his sermon. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that he, in

[1] For the rest it is particularly in his catechetical instructions that John points out these superstitions, and it is natural that the catechumens in particular should be infected with them.

[2] There were several at Antioch, and a celebrated one at Daphne, adv. Jud. i.

[3] See the curious anecdote related by John, *Ib.*

his homilies *against the Jews*, allowed himself to be unduly carried away by an occasional excess of passion.

Out of all Christian dogmas, none was so much assailed by the allied influence of Paganism and Judaism as that of the Resurrection. All the objections which it had been the task of the apologists in the second and third centuries to refute were again incessantly made to Chrysostom. Eternal punishment was, in any case, only accepted with great difficulty. John's hearers were fond of picturing to themselves a merciful God, ready to reward merit, ready also to forget faults. Some amongst them were willing to admit that Jews and heathens would be punished, but whoever had received baptism appeared to them certain of salvation. Chrysostom, whose heart was so tender, sometimes shared the anguish of his congregation, but he retracted nothing of the severity of his doctrine. "Ah! I know that you do not like to hear me speak of hell. Yes, these thoughts are terrible, and torture the heart. Do I not know it myself? do I not feel it as you do? My heart is troubled and palpitates like yours; and the more clearly I understand that hell really exists, the more I shudder and shrink with fear. But I must have courage to say these things, lest both you and I alike fall into this dreaded hell." [1]

Since the Christians ran so great a risk of impairing the purity of their faith by contact with other sects, what relations, we may ask, did Chrysostom allow his faithful to have with pagans

[1] In Ep. ad Rom. xxxi.

or Jews? He says very little about the Jews, from this point of view, and seems to have desired that all intercourse with them should be broken off, since there was little chance of converting them. But it was not the same thing with the remnant of heathens still left; they must be brought to the truth, and consequently it was quite necessary to live with them; moreover, they were still numerous enough to make it impossible to keep them under ban. How were they to be converted? In a very simple manner, said Chrysostom. Doubtless, the last Hellenists still bring up again the different dogmatic objections which the apologists have always had to refute, but they no longer attach the same importance to them; they have a fresh objection, with which their adversaries most obligingly supply them, and that is the relaxation which has made its way into Christian life; the scandal of the contrast between dogma and conduct. Therefore, in order to bring them to the faith, the only thing is for the Christians to lead a good life. "You may be quite sure that if your brethren, who are one with you in faith, are scandalised by your vices, infidels will be still more so. They discover endless pretexts for making accusations against us, when they see a strong man, who might quite well earn his own living, beg and live upon others. That is why they say that we turn our religion to profit. . . .[1] Do you know why the pagans refuse to believe us? Because they ask us to prove our doctrines by deeds, not words; and when they see us building magnificent

[1] In Ep. 1 ad Thess. vi.

houses, purchasing baths and gardens, buying land, they will not believe that life on earth is for us only a preparation for eternal life. . . . Thus you are betraying the mission entrusted to you by Christ. You are no longer the salt of the earth. You will be punished for having been the salt which has no savour."[1] Thus Chrysostom exhorts the faithful; let them always set a good example; thus little by little they will gain influence over those pagans with whom they have intercourse; let them make friends with them; let them for a long space of time treat them very gently, and avoid offending their prejudices, and by degrees they will succeed in winning them over. For, in the main, it is not much which now separates heathens from Christians. All believe in one supreme God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the judgment to come.

This advice is full of moderation and wisdom; yet, of course, Chrysostom was imbued with the ideas of his day, and was not really tolerant, though sometimes, as, for instance, when he wrote the treaty on the Priesthood,[2] he came very near being so. As he grew older, he seems, by evolution contrary to that which many of his ideas underwent, to have become less and less liberal. During his episcopate he was, according to trustworthy evidence, rather disposed to allow recourse to the secular power. During his exile, when he undertook with truly admirable zeal the conversion of Phœnicia, he saw the missionaries, whom he was encouraging, meet with violent resistance, and he himself seemed inclined to desire

[1] In Matt. xii. [2] Book II., ch. iii.

energetic measures.[1] But if Chrysostom shared the views of his age, he, in practice, modified them through charity; for example, one of the complaints brought against him at the Council of the Oak was that he had sheltered with his protection some pagans against the Christians.

John's severity is greater against heretics than pagans. Be they Marcionites, Manichæans or Novatians, he regards them only as hypocrites, victims of their own pride and envy. He does not hesitate to demand the intervention of the law against them, and his argument on this head is that we must never put them to death, but that it is our right, and moreover, our duty, to constrain them to conversion by every means in our power. This is his explanation of the parable of the wheat and the cockle: "Jesus said that in order to forbid wars and murders. For it is not lawful to kill a heretic; if that were done, it would be bringing into the world a war that would be unatonable. . . . But He does not forbid us to repress these same heretics, to close their lips, to deprive them of the liberty of making themselves heard, to break up their meetings; He only forbids putting them to death."[2] Here again we see that Chrysostom is very uncompromising in principle; in practice, I have no doubt that the kindness of his heart softened the harshness of his theory.

Now that we have seen by what precautions Chrysostom sought to preserve intact the faith of his flock, let us inquire what he exacted from them

[1] Ep. l., li., lii., liii., liv., lv., etc. [2] In Matt. xlvi.

in the daily practice of their religion. Here are some of the abuses which he endeavoured to abolish. We have already seen how common it was to put off baptism to years of maturity, and even to the verge of death: "What!" exclaimed John, "you give less honour to God than to men; you take the sacrament of baptism less seriously than the great business of a will. You know very well that a will has no legal force if it has not been drawn up according to the requisite conditions; if it has not been signed by the testator, 'whilst he was still alive, in his right senses, and in good health.' And you wait for baptism till you are driven to it by the physician whispering in your ear: 'It is necessary.'"[1] But he did not very often succeed, under ordinary circumstances, in persuading the catechumens to alter their custom. On the other hand, when any catastrophe happened, the multitude flocked to the baptisteries. In 400, when John was preaching at Constantinople on the Acts of the Apostles,[2] he reminded his hearers how the year before, on the day after an earthquake, they had come in crowds to be baptised.

Exacting as he was about everything which seemed to him essential, most rigorous as he was concerning any relaxation of morals, Chrysostom, who possessed a fund of common sense, did not show the smallest hostility to certain mitigations of discipline, which were, in his opinion, unavoidable in consequence of the changes brought about by time, and the daily increasing development of the

[1] In Act. Ap. i. In Ep. ad Heb. xiii. [2] Homily xli.

Christian community. Thus, although we do not find in his homilies extremely definite information about the rules followed in Antioch in the administration of penance, we may nevertheless believe, by certain indications, that John resigned himself to seeing discipline lose a little of its old severity. One of the complaints adduced against him at the Synod of the Oak was that he gave an impetus to laxity by saying: "If you sin again, do penance again, and, as often as you have sinned, come back to me, and I will cure you." In the same way John could not help being struck with the disadvantages which public confession may entail: scandal to the public, and to the culprit great difficulty, if the fault is very serious, in regaining the good opinion of others; nay,[1] there is even a risk of drawing the attention of the civil power upon him. Therefore, it is better to confess directly to the priest.

Bossuet asserts, and not without reason, that Chrysostom ranks with the Fathers who have spoken most gloriously on the Holy Eucharist. He was skilful in the constant use of parables and similitudes, designed to make the faithful understand how pure must be the soul which is going to participate in the sacred mysteries.[2] The question of frequent communion was brought forward very plainly in his day, and he discussed

[1] See the collection of passages in Montfaucon's edition: *Diatriba* i.

[2] *Vidi Dominum* vi., in Psalm cxxxiii. In Ep. ad Heb. xvii., etc.

it, as he usually does, with great moderation and propriety.

John's imagination is equally inexhaustible when he is panegyrising fasting, especially in that time of Lent, which he loved with special affection, because it was *par excellence* the time for preaching; but he found that his flock frequently very ill understood the real meaning of fasting; moreover, as Easter drew near, they were very fond of following the Jewish rather than the Christian tradition, and he complained that they attributed an exaggerated intrinsic value to abstinence. He wished to give them a more reasonable idea of it by explaining that it ought to serve to subdue the flesh, and to result in the correction of vice and in moral perfection. By boldly recalling to the minds of his hearers the reproaches addressed by the Pharisees to Jesus, *Ecce homo edax et vini potator*,[1] he sometimes exposed himself to the accusation of despising and decrying fasting. "No, I do not blame it," he replied; "far from that, I give it great praise; but I am grieved when I see you neglecting all other precepts, thinking that in order to gain salvation it is sufficient to fast, whereas, in the choir of virtues, abstinence only takes the last place." It is to the great honour of Chrysostom that he was always the apostle of the spirit and not of the letter, and that he considered true piety to consist less in fulfilment of rites than in sincere faith and zealous charity.

For this reason he also took a great deal of trouble to teach his flock how to pray. He

[1] In Matt. xlvi.; *cf. ibid.* xxx., xx., etc.

feared, as he did in other practices of religion, their attaching to prayer a value quite independent of the intention. He ceaselessly reminded them that prayer is good only when it comes from an upright and pure heart; he repeated again and again that it ought to serve to raise up the soul rather than to obtain favours from God. He went so far as to say that fulfilling our duties strictly and doing good works was the best way of praying.[1] Let us not, on the other hand, in our turn, misunderstand Chrysostom. He desires that prayer should be pure, and that from it should be banished every interested intention, every superstitious thought. But he also desires that it should be frequent, that it should be used before and after meals, at the canonical hours fixed by the Church; nay, since it is the only efficacious means of preserving ourselves from temptations, and since they are of hourly occurrence, it ought in good truth to be uninterrupted.[2] Certainly the faithful cannot pray like monks, they have their business to attend to, but let them, in the course of the day, make from time to time a short, ejaculatory prayer. It would also be well to add to the prayers said daily, a prayer in the middle of the night. But John found it difficult to convert his hearers to this last practice, despite his commentaries on the hundred and eighteenth psalm, *Media nocte consurgebam.*

[1] In Psalm IV. In Isaiam. John is fond of quoting, on the subject of prayer, the beautiful passages in Isaias.

[2] In Annam ii.

What I have just said only refers to private prayer. Chrysostom, like so many other great bishops of the day, took great care to regularly organise prayer in common, to which he attributes a peculiar value and more certain results. "God is like a king who refuses pardon to a condemned man at the request of a single suppliant, and sometimes grants it to the imploring cries of a whole city."[1] Thus Chrysostom was greatly instrumental in diffusing the practice of singing the Psalms, at Antioch by advice and by preaching, at Constantinople, when he was invested with the episcopal power, by effectual measures. To explain the importance that he attached to it, let it not be forgotten that it was at Antioch, under the bishop Leontius, that the custom of antiphonal chanting was first added to the earlier responsorial singing of the psalms. Flavian and Diodorus had subsequently enthusiastically adopted this new psalmody, which was introduced by St Ambrose into the West.[2]

Prayer in common presupposes punctual attendance at church and due attention to the liturgy; in Syria and at Constantinople both were very imperfect. At the great feasts of Easter and Pentecost, the churches were crammed with people: it was the fashion to appear there and to come in full dress. On ordinary days the congregation was not large, and mainly composed of the lower classes.[3]

[1] *De prophetarum obscuritate*, ii.

[2] See *Duchesne*, "Origin of Christian Worship," p. 108.

[3] In Ep. ii. ad Thess. iii.

Whether there were many people or few, the Syrian public was extremely distracted, and not particularly reverent. The deacon, who went through the ranks of people, and played the part that we assign to the verger, repeated unweariedly "Attend" (Πρόσχωμεν); but the ceaseless chatter went on. "How disgraceful! When the imperial edicts are read to you, you would not dare to breathe a word, nor to make the least movement; you know that the smallest indiscretion would render you liable to the accusation of high treason. And you are not afraid of committing a worse crime, of running a more serious danger, by showing want of respect to the Word of God."[1] People came to church to chat with their friends, as they did in the barbers' shops; the church was an ordinary rendezvous for a business interview; it was found more comfortable, in the very hot weather, than the agora. Anything served as a pretext for distraction. One day Chrysostom hears a slight murmur while he is preaching, and sees that faces are turned away from him; the lamps are being lighted.[2] The congregation scuffled for the front places in order to hear the preacher's rather weak voice; there was the same confusion when they presented themselves at the giving of Holy Communion. The two sexes were separated by a wooden barrier which was not quite useless, though Chrysostom considered it hardly sufficient: "There ought to be a wall between

[1] Ad Antioch. v., vi., xx., etc.; In Act. Ap. xxix.; In Ep. i. ad Cor. xxxvi.

[2] In Genesim iv.

you and the women, but since you would have none of it, our fathers did at least set up this balustrade. For I have heard old men say that it was not there originally. It was said in those days that in Jesus Christ there is no distinction of sex, and in the time of the Apostles men and women were not separated."[1] Finally, most unbecoming haste was shown in leaving the church; John resigned himself, though reluctantly, to witnessing the departure of those who considered a sermon wearisome; but he was full of indignation when they would not stay till the end of the liturgy, which was then, it is true, rather long. He forbade them to go before the prayers were finished; nevertheless, there were some which the priest was obliged to say almost alone. This was a great trouble to John, whose desire would have been not merely that no one should leave too soon, but that all should remain some time, once the office was finished, in order to meditate and to recollect themselves.[2]

The above pages have, we hope, given some idea of Chrysostom's wonderful preaching, taken as a whole. It is wonderful in the first place by its breadth and extent, for it foresees everything, examines everything, regulates everything; it undeniably contains few theological discussions, and the dogmatic teaching is very simple; but, on the other hand, not one single point of moral conduct or religious practice is neglected; the preacher gives the Christian good and appropriate advice for every moment of his existence and for all his

[1] In Matt. lxxiii. [2] In Annam iv.

actions. The result of his close observation and his incomparable intuitive powers is that he has an unerring knowledge of all the questions which interest his hearers, of all their habitual weaknesses; he is equally well acquainted with the art of touching them, of making an entrance into their souls, of gaining their confidence and subjugating them to his authority. The collection of his homilies is a complete manual of Christian life, and he reveals himself thus to us as one of the best directors of conscience who have ever existed, and as the director, not of a few chosen souls, but what is far more remarkable, of the whole of a large city; and yet his influence, however wide-spread and increasingly diffused, loses nothing of its force or directness.

This preaching is none the less admirable by reason of other extremely rare qualities. To begin with—and here I shall only say a few words, because I have already treated the subject at sufficient length—John is in sober truth an apostle, in his zeal, his laboriousness, and the burning fire of charity which consumes him. How he loved his flock! With what joy did he devote himself to them! Whatever obstacles he encounters, however far-reaching is his ambition, however scanty the result he really attains, he never grows cold, he is never discouraged. Without hesitation, without weakness, with a persistency of effort not less wonderful than the inexhaustible fertility which causes his oratorical talent never to lose its freshness, he carries on this undertaking of a general reform of morals,

which at an early date he perceived to be necessary, and which, as he works, grows larger and more formidable before his eyes.

And let us note this surprising contrast;—the more John's soul overflows with that passion, without which nothing great can be attempted, the more ardent and eager it is, the more—at least during the palmy years at Antioch—does his mind remain unperturbed and master of itself. However spontaneous and vehement the bursts of passion-inspired eloquence may appear to be, he is not carried away; he rules this passion at will; he knows exactly how sometimes to curb it, sometimes to let it go, according to the needs of the moment. In every question that he raises, and often some are of great delicacy, the solution which he offers is always the result of mature reflection, wise and temperate. We must never allow the vehemence of his language to delude us as to the real moderation of his ideas. The two first necessities to which the preacher must yield, are often to repeat himself, and to ask a great deal in order to get anything. We must divide John's preaching into two parts. At first we perceive nothing but the very high ideal which he sets before his hearers, which he hopes to get adopted by a chosen few, to which he strives to conform himself, and which it is always well to present to the minds of men, even if the greater number find it too far removed from them and too inaccessible. Let us read each of his homilies attentively, and we shall very easily discover what are the actual demands which John makes on the average

Christian. We shall see, from his very anxiety not to work in vain, not to preach any sermons without fruit, how skilful he is in proportioning his requirements to the strength of his listeners. I have already made this clear by showing how intimately united he always was with his audience, and how careful he was to find out what impression his words had produced, in order to keep a constant watch upon himself, and, if necessary, to amend. John is no dreamer, living apart, and feeding his mind on a barren ideal; he lives in complete reality, in the midst of his brethren, asking them questions, inviting them to come to him, to open their hearts to him, and there is not one of his homilies which is not the spontaneous outcome of this familiar and affectionate intercourse which he keeps up with them.

Therefore, in this man, in whose soul dwelt in harmony elements apparently contradictory, we find at the same time an impetuous zeal which carries him into utopianism, and an unerring practical sense, which soon brings him back to reality. Let us, out of all the questions which he treated in the pulpit, take that one on which he felt most keenly, the question of riches. The desire to revive in Antioch in the fourth century the primitive Church of Jerusalem is certainly a utopian scheme; on the other hand, how wise and how efficacious is the advice by which John teaches his flock the small practices of charity, hospitality, and almsgiving.

And just as Chrysostom, if we contemplate him at

this time of full maturity, has a soul wide enough to contain these two opposite qualities, and to fill up the dividing space; so in the same way, if we follow him afresh from period to period, we cannot deny that he became transformed, but the transformation was natural and harmonious, in the direction of growing perfection and real development. Let us look back at him as he was when leading a monastic life, or even when, having only lately returned from solitude, he wrote his first treatises. In this first fervour it seemed as though he had renounced the world for ever, that he could only satisfy his aspirations by asceticism, and that he held in slight esteem those who, whilst remaining in the world, strove to lead in it a life in conformity with the Gospel. But he goes back to Antioch, receives holy orders, yields himself up again to the influence of that bishop, Meletius, who seems to have been so wise and temperate: he learns to recognise fresh duties; he becomes aware that all virtue is not contained in those struggles with oneself, nor in those ascetic austerities, which, nevertheless, will always seem to him useful for strengthening character, and to which, henceforth, he will merely not wish people to confine themselves. He looks from a different point of view at that laxity of morals and general coarseness of belief, which at first made him so wrathful as to drive him to the pitch of fleeing from the world; he understands, now, that there is something better to be done than to get angry about them, since it is possible to amend them. The apostle succeeds the ascetic.

Undoubtedly he does not give up, either for himself or others, that ideal of pure and holy life which had drawn him into the Syrian mountains, and had kept him there so long. But for himself he widens it and adds to it social activity, or, to use a more Christian expression, charity; for others, he makes the said ideal more accessible, accepting marriage, accepting life in the world, resigned to the necessity of contenting himself, as to the greater part of his hearers, with some progress, however small, but, nevertheless, setting before them as the model at which they ought all to aim, the monastic life, which alone is in harmony with the Gospel.

By a curious piece of sophistry his flock frequently alleged the very example of the monks in order to excuse their own weaknesses. They would not have needed much compulsion to make them assert that there were, and there ought to be, two systems of morality—one for solitaries and the clergy, the other for ordinary Christians. But John, on the contrary, reminded them that there is only one Gospel, and that it is of universal application. If we wish to be sincere, let us recognise this; that, even in towns, we ought to lead the monastic—that is to say, the evangelical life, for it is nothing else. We ought to be as temperate as the monks; we ought to pray like the monks; we ought to work like them. "All the precepts of the law are common to us and to the monks, with one single exception—that of celibacy."[1]

[1] In Matt. vii. and later on, in the same terms in Ep. ad Heb. vii.

Thus the scene of Chrysostom's dream is no longer in the deserts of Nitria, in the grottos of Libanus or Taurus, among the anchorites or the cenobites; but, all the same, it is not less lofty in character—nay, it has become more ambitious. What Chrysostom would like to bring about, both at Antioch and at Constantinople, is the existence of a truly Christian city, inhabited by Christians wholly submissive to the new law, fulfilling without reservation the precepts of the Gospel—in a word, real monks in the midst of the world, in everything resembling the most severe ascetics, with the exception of marriage, πλὴν τοῦ γάμου.

Third Book

CHRYSOSTOM'S EPISCOPATE AT CONSTANTINOPLE

CHAPTER I

ELEVATION OF CHRYSOSTOM TO THE EPISCOPATE—HIS ATTEMPTS AT REFORM—EVANGELISATION OF THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS—STRUGGLES AGAINST HERESY—WORK OF CONVERTING THE GOTHS

ON the 27th of September 397, Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, died, and the first see in Christendom, after that of Rome, became vacant. Chrysostom's fame had long ago crossed the boundaries of Syria. Curiously enough it was an uninteresting person, the eunuch Eutropius, then all-powerful at the court of Arcadius, who was the promoter of his candidature, and John, being thus proposed to the clergy and people, was elected,[1] though he had not put himself forward. His election must have baffled many intrigues, and been a bitter pill to more than one candidate, whether he were openly avowed as such or not.

[1] We know this last part of John's life mainly through Palladius and through those homilies preached at Constantinople, which are important historical documents. Let us add to them some passages of Socrates or Sozomen, which we will quote in their proper place.

We know at any rate that it was a disagreeable surprise to the bishop—at that time most influential throughout the East, Theophilus of Alexandria, who had thought to obtain the vacant see for one of his own creatures. Nevertheless, when the event was once accomplished, Theophilus, who was an astute politician, feigned to accept it willingly; it was he who, on the 26th of February 398, consecrated Chrysostom.

What were Chrysostom's own sentiments? Did he still retain that humility, that repugnance to high office, which twenty-five years earlier had led him to elude the episcopate by flight? We have seen that he himself had done nothing towards his own election; far from it, it had been necessary to surprise him at Antioch, remove him thence, and take him by force to Constantinople. Nevertheless, can we be sure that once the sacrifice was consummated he did not involuntarily experience a secret joy? It is certain that he continued inaccessible to any feeling of vanity or self-love; but could he, without emotion, behold himself clothed with power which would at last allow him to attempt the full putting in practice of his ideas? Till then he had only exercised action by means of speech, and great as had been his influence over Bishop Flavian, he had only been able at Antioch to devote himself freely to his task of reform of morals through the medium of preaching. It now became possible to him to carry into execution many projects, the plan of which had doubtless been conceived for some time; he saw his field of action widen; he was no longer

to confine himself to the improvement of his flock; he might also work at reforming the clergy themselves, an undertaking which, since the days when he wrote the treatise on the Priesthood, seemed to him equally essential. The promptitude with which he set to work, that sort of fever which caused him to embark in the very first months of his administration on such a great number of difficult and most various enterprises, all show that if he had long shunned honours, he was none the less ready to use the power conferred by them, and that for a considerable time he had not merely been reflecting on the general duties of the episcopate, which he analysed so wisely in his treatise, but had in a more definite manner settled in his mind what reforms were urgently needed.

Therefore it was with joy and with generous confidence that, on the day after his enthronement, he entered upon his office. And yet what disenchantments, some of which might be foreseen, were awaiting him. Who shall say that he himself had not a presentiment of them? Not only in quitting Antioch was he leaving his most congenial surroundings, where everything helped and favoured him in his works, whereas in the new surroundings in which he was to dwell at Constantinople he would be engaged in fatal struggles with fresh and very serious difficulties, but he was also exchanging the task for which he was naturally made, evangelisation and the ministry of the word, for another to which his disposition was less suited. During the great and calm years of his priesthood, when he had

no arms but his eloquence and charity, the energy of his soul had been specially employed in devotedness and tenderness, and the vehement passion which filled him had spent itself harmlessly in magnificent oratorical periods. Thus the wisdom and moderation of his ideas have, through his most burning words, been clearly manifest to us. But at Constantinople he was to meet with more formidable opposition, and, at the same time, was to be the possessor of real power to crush it. We must acknowledge that, as soon as he finds ill-success attending his efforts, he will sometimes get angry beyond measure, and will suffer himself to become embittered; he will lose something of that admirable balance of mind, which he had hitherto maintained. As a man of action he had admirable qualities; for what is more valuable than his generous and confident ardour? He lacked self-command and the *sang froid* and skill of the politician, as we shall soon perceive, but if he had had them, would he have been Chrysostom?

We shall say very little about his preaching at Constantinople, having already made some reference to it in our preceding chapter, and shall confine ourselves to noting a few points which distinguish it from his preaching at Antioch. We must not make the mistake of forgetting that at Constantinople the Catholic community was relatively less in number than at Antioch. True,[1] things were no longer as they were in the days when Theodosius had been obliged to appeal to the co-operation of

[1] In Act. Ap. xi.

armed force for the enthronement of St Gregory Nazianzen, and the Arians were no longer masters, but it was a case of winning back to the faith a good portion of the population. Amongst the faithful John found, in the lower classes at least, as much attachment and devotion as had fallen to his share in Antioch; from the rich he met with more decided hostility. During the greater part of his episcopate he was too much absorbed by business to be able to preach with the same regularity as in Syria. Nevertheless, there were still periods when he preached twice a week; as when he was giving a commentary on the Psalter.[1] But at other times he did not succeed in preaching more than once a month, sometimes even the whole month passed without his appearing at the ambo.[2] Generally he spoke in the Great Church; it was situated in the principal square, in the centre of the town, near the senate house and the imperial palace. It was also sometimes in the Church of the Resurrection (Anastasia), where St Gregory Nazianzen had begun to preach, before a small number of the faithful, when all the other churches in the town were in the hands of the Arians. It was also in the church of St Irene or in some country chapel. The homilies which had this period for date,[3] if we except some splendid discourses, like those upon the disgrace of Eutropius and some others, are often more

[1] In Ps. xlviii.

[2] In E. ii. ad Thess. iv.

[3] Homilies on the Acts; on the Psalms; on the Epistles to the Colossians, Thessalonians, etc.

careless in style than those delivered at Antioch; we are more conscious of improvisation; it is evident that the greater part were published just as they were taken down by the reporter. Let us also remark that in these the excitement sometimes becomes more violent and the tone more overbearing.

It is certainly greatly to John's honour, that in the manifold cares of his episcopate he did not, on the whole, neglect preaching, and that he continued, with more regularity than could reasonably be expected, the simple and practical teaching which he was accustomed to give. All the same, it is plain that from this date preaching is relegated, as far as he is concerned, to the second rank, since he can now act. Let us now look at him in his *rôle* of an active reformer. At the very outset of his career, when he first arrived at Constantinople, he was shocked by the laxity which had crept even into the ranks of the clergy; he wished to correct it without delay, and in this undertaking, doubtless, lies the origin of the coalition of hatred[1] to which he succumbed. His predecessor Nectarius[2] was a lordly bishop, who rivalled the civil authorities in display, kept open house, and spent enormous sums of money. Now, John's first act was to put up for sale the precious things which filled the bishop's house, to close the door against the idle and the men of the world; to make an end of the custom of

[1] Palladius, Dialogue v.

[2] He was a senator of Tarsus, who was not yet baptized when first the idea was entertained of making him bishop.

those luxurious banquets which had obtained for Nectarius great popularity. Public opinion was displeased with him in this matter; men were scandalised at this bishop who "eat alone," and went about repeating that he was leading "a Cyclopic life." [1]

He did not confine himself to setting the episcopal palace in order; he looked around him and discovered that some astute and unscrupulous ecclesiastics had assumed authority over a very rich widow, named Olympias, as generous as she was rich, and were imposing upon her; he very soon succeeded in substituting his influence for theirs, and in getting Olympias into the habit of managing her alms well, and making them produce the maximum of real utility. This case did not stand by itself, even if it were more remarkable than others; Chrysostom once gave to everyone, from the pulpit, the same advice as that which he prudently poured into the ear of Olympias: "When one of the princes of the Church lives in plenty, do not give to him, even if he is a pious man, but bestow your preference on him who is thirsty, even if he be not distinguished in the same way for piety. For that is what Christ desires when He says: 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren . . . but the maimed, the lame and the blind, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense' (St Luke xiv.); for we ought not to dispense these benefits at hap-hazard, but distribute them to those who are hungry, those who are

[1] *Cf.* Palladius, *ibid.*

thirsty, those who are naked. For our Lord does not merely say: you gave Me to eat; but at the same time: I was hungry. He says in fact: I was hungry and you gave Me to eat (Matt. xxv. 35). If, therefore, as a general rule, we ought to give food to him who is hungry we ought especially to do so when this person is at the same time a pious man. If, on the contrary, it is a case of a pious man, but one who is not in need, do not give to him, for it would be no use, and Christ has not commanded it. What am I saying? He who lives in abundance and accepts gifts is not a pious man."[1] We may easily imagine what impression such words and such actions must have made on the members of a clergy in such a state of laxity as those at whom Chrysostom was aiming. He did not find less matter for censure in the lives of many of the monks at Constantinople. We shall soon see how in the last years of his life he strove more and more to excite the activity of the monks, and to turn them from an external asceticism towards work that bore fruit. He was scandalised at the number of those who lived in the capital as idlers and beggars. The parasites who laid siege to the fortune of Olympias were recruited from amongst those men, at least as much as from among the ecclesiastics.

The clergy of Constantinople did not only number in its ranks certain members who were very greedy and selfish, it was afflicted with a more serious evil, the most dangerous of all; purity of morals was sometimes compromised by them. Long had

[1] In Ep. ad Phil. xi.

the Church, in other places besides the capital, fought with that dangerous custom of the dwelling together of ecclesiastics and virgins, who, though purposing to observe continence, claimed the right of living together, either because the clerics maintained that they needed women for the management of their household, or because the virgins alleged that they could not do without the clerics for the management of their property. We know that from the days of Cyprian the existence of such abuses was proved in Africa, and the great doctor condemned them with extreme severity in his letter to Pomponius.[1] At Antioch there had also been similar cases at an early period; the most celebrated is that of the famous heretical bishop, Paul of Samosata, whose morals were much criticised by his adversaries.[2] The council of Nicæa had forbidden ecclesiastics to live in common with any women except their sisters, mothers or aunts. But the Canon was ill observed, and the women who were called Suneisactæ or Agapetes[3] remained. John, like all wise-minded men, beheld in this custom a danger which threatened to imperceptibly ruin the celibacy of the priesthood. He struggled against it all his life. And we see that he points it out in one of the early homilies on St Matthew,[4] which date from Antioch. At Constantinople he took most energetic

[1] Ep. iii. (Hartel's edition). [2] Eusebius, H. E., vii. 10.

[3] Συνεἰσακται, brought in secretly; in Latin Subintroductæ; Agapetes, spiritual sisters.

[4] The 17th.

measures of reform. We are therefore inclined to think that the two treatises which we have from his pen on this subject, which are remarkable for their vehemence, and for a plainness of language and analysis perhaps still greater than in the homilies, were composed when he was a bishop. Nevertheless, we cannot prove with absolute certainty that they really belong to that period. One is entitled: *Against those who bring virgins into their house*, and the other: *Against the virgins consecrated to God, who dwell in the house with men*. Thus they review—with the same severity—both possible cases.

Even many of those among the virgins consecrated to God, whose moral conduct was irreproachable, did not all the same appear to Chrysostom as being exempt from all criticism. He was evidently of opinion that they had a great deal too much tendency to coquetry, and reprimanded them vigorously, as does St Jerome, in certain letters. It is uncertain at what date or where were delivered the homilies on the First Epistle to Timothy, of which the eighth contains a curious page on this subject: "A simple toilet may be so *recherché* as to surpass a rich toilet . . . a particular shade may be chosen even amongst dark materials; great art may be shown in arranging the girdle well, and there are virgins who show themselves as expert in this as actresses, who manage to avoid its being too loose at the side, or on the other hand, too tight, and who steer skilfully clear of either excess. They arrange the dress in harmonious folds, which are more alluring than silken garments. Thus again, it is little use for

the shoes to be black; what does that matter if the black has a beautiful gloss, if the shape is elegant, the heel low? What does it matter either if women do not paint, if they wash themselves with the greatest care, if they wear a veil of whiteness still more dazzling than the face, and over this veil, with the ingenious idea of making a stronger contrast, a black fillet? What shall I say of movements of the eyes, of gait, of gesture? . . . But some may say, 'I think no evil'; I am no coquette; I do that quite naturally without thinking about it; and thus virgins are no longer held in honour, but are ridiculed, and it is their own fault." These words were perhaps uttered at Antioch, but we know, through Palladius, that John, when at Constantinople, showed extreme severity to the virgins who were too worldly, and that this was one of the causes of the hatred he excited in some circles.

By the severity of his opinions and of his regulations, he displeased the widows as much as the virgins, when these former remained widows, not in order to renounce life in the world, but, on the contrary, in order to lead such a life with more liberty and enjoyment; he would then have even preferred to see them enter upon a second marriage. He had known such women at the beginning of his career, and had described them in his book *Consolation* addressed to the widow of Therasius; he met some like them again at the end, and made among them three implacable enemies, Marsa, Castricia, Eugraphia, who, together with the Empress, worked steadily to compass his ruin. It is true also that among that chosen band of women,

from whom the Church recruited her deaconesses, he found unchanging devotion, and it is to them, before leaving Constantinople for his second exile, that he addressed his last counsels and final farewells.

Simultaneously with these reforms of the morals of his clergy,[1] John was striving to set right the management of Church property. From the time when he wrote the treatise on the Priesthood, he laid much stress on this difficult task, which, after the Christian communities grew rich, was one of the most important incumbent on the bishop, who had thus become a kind of steward. He did not fail to put his ideas into practice when possible. We have seen that with one stroke of the pen he suppressed all the luxury and expense in which Nectarius had delighted. He went farther. He was undoubtedly very much impressed by the remarkable example that Basil had set at Cesarea, and was desirous of organising public relief at Constantinople, where, as yet, everything had to be done. He wished to institute at once the hospitals and asylums which were lacking.[2] Later on he was reproached with having made over some of the Church property to this purpose. In these days we are too far removed from the events, and possess information too scanty to know certainly whether in the course of this business there were

[1] Let us likewise add to the motives which, according to Palladius, estranged many priests from him, his attempt to organise for men night prayers in the churches.

[2] Palladius (Dialogue V.) informs us that he founded several establishments of this kind, and supplied them with a large staff of doctors, superintendents, and nurses.

really any generous imprudence in John's conduct. Let us rest assured in any case, that if Chrysostom had indeed for a time impoverished the community that he was governing (and to begin with, it was not without useful result), he would have found no difficulty, had time been allowed him, in furnishing it with fresh resources.

We have seen that John had been astonished on his arrival at Constantinople to see that the Catholic community there was less in number than he expected. We have also seen, that, once he was a priest, he gave the faithful prudent advice in order to enable them to convert the pagans; but evidently, in Syria, his chief care was to reform Christian society rather than to organise an active propaganda outside it. At Constantinople, on the contrary, he launched out into great undertakings in the way of apostolate and conversion.

In the first place, if the Syrian country districts, at least in the neighbourhood of Antioch, already contained, it appears, almost as large a proportion of Christians as the city, it was not the same thing round Constantinople; and, in any case, priests were rare outside the towns, and were very ignorant; the faithful, if they were poor husbandmen, as was often the case, were deprived of almost all religious instruction. John, ever so sensitive to all the woes of the poor, was touched by this abandonment. Ah! if he had had more leisure, how much he would have liked to evangelise the peasantry.[1] But he had too much to do in the

[1] In Ep. ad Col. ix.

town; therefore, turning to the large landowners, he said to them: "You build baths and markets in the country, you bring in the enervated manners and ways of life belonging to towns; you corrupt the peasants, and the fatal consequence is that they become undisciplined. Thus, in your vain search for a fleeting popularity, you act directly against your own interests. You had better try and bring the peasants over to the Christian faith, if they are still pagans, to the practice of Christian virtues, if they already belong to us. But how are you to correct their faults if they continue to see your negligence with regard to their souls? Therefore, build churches instead of baths. Let no one have an estate without a church. Do not say that there is one in a neighbouring town; it must be on your own estate. Provide, at the same time, the sum necessary for the maintenance of a priest, a deacon, and all the necessary sacred ministers. Give the dowry of a daughter to this church, which will in good truth be your daughter. If the Emperor were to ask you to build him a house, were it only to be his lodging for one day, you would hasten to obey. Do not do less for God. You think the expenditure too great? Begin with a modest building; your heir will add to it."[1]

Constantinople had been for a long time one of the strongholds of Arianism; the Arians were still reigning supreme when St Gregory Nazianzen

[1] In Act. Ap. xviii.

began his career there. But the very orthodox Theodosius had deprived them of the churches, and from that date they were obliged to go and hold their meetings outside the walls. Nevertheless, they were still numerous, and would not let themselves be forgotten. They made appointments with each other for meeting, on Sundays and festivals, in the porticoes, in certain squares of the town, whence they started in procession, singing their hymns. Chrysostom regarded this as a challenge, and replied by instituting, at the same hours, and in the same places as these Arian processions, Catholic processions, at which psalms were sung, and in which magnificent silver crosses, adorned with tapers, were carried; he was then in great favour at court, and it was a eunuch of the empress, named Briso, who organised these ceremonial rites and walked at the head. It was inevitable that the rival bands should meet, and Chrysostom must have foreseen it; when this actually occurred, stones were thrown on both sides; a scuffle began, and Briso was wounded. In consequence of this scandal Arcadius absolutely prohibited the Arian processions.[1]

Side by side with the Arians at Constantinople was a community of Cathari, that is to say, of Novatians. Discipline, rather than dogma, separated them from the Church. They did not admit that anyone, who, after baptism, had relapsed into deadly sin, could receive absolution; they shut him out of the Church, leaving him no hope of

[1] Socrates, H. E., iv.

pardon till after death, thus recognising in God alone power to absolve him. The Novatians had as bishop a certain Sisinnius, a clever man and a man of the world, who, if we are to believe the historian Socrates, a person perhaps somewhat prejudiced in his favour, stood very well with the court, and was in high repute with the great. John's just mind and tender heart could feel nothing but repugnance for a proud, rigid, inhuman sect. We have already seen how he had always shown himself disposed to make the Sacrament of Penance accessible, and no one has ever been more kind to the repentant. He treated with ridicule the claim of the Cathari to a perfection, which does not belong to this world, and, in one of the first homilies that he delivered at Constantinople, said[1]: "Did he, who traversed earth and sea as if he had wings, he who conquered so many nations for Christ, he to whom the depths of the Divine wisdom were revealed, he who was caught up even to the third heaven, ever venture to speak thus of himself? No, quite the contrary; he treats himself as one born out of due time (1 Cor. xv. 8), as the least of the Apostles; he does not even deem himself worthy of the name of an apostle.

"What, then, is this assurance? this pretension? this folly? You are a man, and you call yourself pure. Utterly absurd! If you call yourself pure, it is as if you said that the sea is pure of waves. But as the sea is never without waves, so we

[1] 6th unedited homily of Montfaucon.

are never without sin. Numberless passions have troubled the soul, many inconveniences, countless diseases of the body, an enormous amount of stains from earthly things, and you dare to say that in this sea you remain pure from all these waves. And why do I speak of a whole lifetime? Answer me; can anyone say of a single one of his days that it was pure." The subject was so near to his heart that he could not contain himself when treating of it. Now Sisinnius was a cold man, a lover of quibbles, and a critic of words, incapable of understanding Chrysostom's transports of soul. Separating from its context one of John's passionate outbursts, he accused him of having said, when pronouncing, as usual, a panegyric on penitence: "Even if you have already done penance a thousand times, nevertheless, come back here"; and he wrote on this matter a book of violent polemics against him. But he had misunderstood his rival; Chrysostom incited no one to sin; as Neander has well said: "He was pitiless to the sin, full of mercy to the sinner," and is not that Christianity?

As long as he remained in Syria Chrysostom had little knowledge of the barbarians; he learnt to know them at Constantinople, where, particularly after the defeat of Valens, they had remained in considerable numbers, as also in the immediate neighbourhood. Little by little they spread all over the empire, and those who came in peaceably, in the guise of auxiliaries, were not always the least dangerous; indeed, at last they formed a considerable part of the population in the capital and

the surrounding districts; most of them were Goths, the larger proportion of whom had become converts to Arianism. One of the projects first formed by Chrysostom, after his enthronement, was to bring them over to the orthodox faith. He sent missionaries, chosen mainly from amongst the monks, to the shores of the Black Sea, where there was a large colony of Goths; and he conceived the more original and more difficult plan of founding the elements of a national clergy, speaking the Gothic language, from amidst the little community of barbarians that he had succeeded in forming in the town itself. The eighth of the homilies, which Montfaucon was the first to publish, is very curious; in it John gives an account of a ceremony that he organised in order to make manifest to everyone the importance of this work. It was the first or second year of his episcopate. He gathered together his flock in one of the principal churches in Constantinople, that of St Paul, and in their presence had Mass said by a Gothic priest, who afterwards preached in his own language. Then Chrysostom in his turn speaks, and expresses the holy exaltation which fills him at these his fresh conquests. He would like pagans to be there also, in order that they might ascertain for themselves that the barbarians were in their turn being converted. The heathen philosophers never succeeded in converting anyone, whereas Christ, after having subjected to His law the whole Roman Empire, pushes His triumphs further, and conquers nations whose very existence Plato had never suspected. As for the Jews, let them be

ashamed of allowing themselves to be outstripped by a fresh crop of Gentiles, and in order to put the final touch to their humiliation, and at the same time to consecrate the nobility of the new converts by examples from the Old and New Testaments, the orator invokes Abraham, who was likewise a barbarian, and reminds them of the Magi. From that day John never lost sight of the Gothic community. During his exile, even at Cucusus, whence he was never to return, he thought about appointing a successor to the Gothic Catholic bishop, who had just died.

Such were the manifold undertakings which Chrysostom was bold enough to set in hand during the two first years of his episcopate—reform of the episcopal house, general reform of the clergy, organisation of ecclesiastical charity, and for that purpose, building of hospitals, evangelisation of the country districts, polemics against the Arian or Novatian heresy, and conversion of the Goths. Let us now bear in mind that he kept up, as far as was possible to him, his customary preaching, and that it was at the same period that he preached most vehemently against luxury and riches, or against plays and spectacles, and we shall be able to account for the emotion which so much energy and boldness must have produced in a worldly city, accustomed to the rule of the indifferent Nectarius. We shall understand the passionate devotion which Chrysostom inspired in many; we shall also understand the hatred which began now to smoulder in secret, and which we shall soon see burst forth into flame.

CHAPTER II

THE FALL OF EUTROPIUS

THE name of Eutropius is scarcely known to us nowadays except through the poetical invectives of Claudian, and the oratorical invectives of Chrysostom; moreover, it does not seem that he would gain much through being presented to us by perfectly impartial historical witnesses. Nevertheless, for reasons of which we are ignorant, he had been, as we have seen, the instigator of John's candidature, and for some time the new bishop enjoyed his entire favour. If he did not retain it, the cause was not that it had been withdrawn, but that he himself did not think that he could any longer continue to have a right to it. Perhaps Eutropius thought, by showering marks of honour upon Chrysostom, by guaranteeing to him support in all the undertakings that we have just enumerated, to secure himself against the criticisms which the ardent reformer did not spare other people. But he little understood the man with whom he had to deal, and did not succeed in avoiding the conflict.

The power of Eutropius was nearly boundless, for Arcadius always stood in need of a protector, and

the eunuch was the real master of the State. In 399 he caused himself to be made consul, which supplied Claudian with matter for some of his finest satirical verses.[1] He was accused of selling the highest offices, and then of authorising his creatures to get back by every kind of exaction the money they had advanced; on the other hand he was pitiless to those who stood in his way; he was surrounded by informers. Some homilies which were undoubtedly preached towards this period seem to allude to this arbitrary government, and to the misfortunes which were the consequence of it.[2] At the same time Chrysostom tried, without the smallest success, to make Eutropius listen to a few remonstrances; he protested with peculiar authority and urgency when the favourite maintained that he should not respect the right of sanctuary belonging to churches. This right, the inheritance of the Christian basilicas from the pagan temples where suppliants were received, was not so much a legally-sanctioned privilege as a custom, generally however regarded as sacred. Eutropius ordered that certain persons who had taken refuge at the foot of the altars should be forcibly seized; Chrysostom unhesitatingly opposed this proceeding; and the conflict, once started, was distinguished by great acrimony, especially when the bishop took upon himself the defence of Pentadia, widow of Tarasius, one of the victims of the eunuch. The latter,

[1] *Omnia jam fient eunucho consule monstro.*

[2] For instance, the passages quoted by Neander of the 1st homily in Ep. ad Coloss., or of the 2nd in Ep. ad Philipp.

irritated beyond measure, obtained from Arcadius an edict which expressly took away the right of sanctuary from churches.

But he had scarcely gained this victory when fortune changed. The discontent was tolerably general, and yet an opportunity was wanted for it to break out. This was supplied by the rebellion of a Gothic officer named Tribigild, who raised troops in Phrygia, and began to ravage Asia Minor. Eutropius despatched against him one of his favourites named Leo, whose campaign has been related by Claudian, and, if we are to believe him, it was tolerably grotesque. It is true that Eutropius sent with Leo Gaïnas, the commander of the Gothic troops in the capital; but Gaïnas very speedily betrayed him, and entered into a secret understanding with Tribigild, whilst at Constantinople he caused it to be believed that the situation was desperate, and that the sacrifice of the eunuch was absolutely necessary. The intrigue succeeded through the concurrence of the Empress Eudoxia, whom Eutropius had offended, and who found this sovereign power, which she was destined to inherit, irksome to her ambition. There was a sort of riot among the garrison at Constantinople, who demanded the head of Eutropius, and the haughty favourite was compelled, in order to escape the storm, to come to the foot of the altar, and demand that right of sanctuary which he had intended to abolish.

This was a splendid revenge for Chrysostom, and the occasion of one of the greatest oratorical triumphs he had won since the sedition of 387. It

was then, indeed, that he delivered the two still famous homilies on the *disgrace of Eutropius*. The Sunday after the fall of the favourite and his flight to the church he preached on that subject, which was so familiar to him, the vanity of the goods of this world. We cannot refrain from quoting the exordium, well as it is known: "The time is always fitting, but to-day more fitting than ever, to cry out: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity! Where is now the brilliant dignity of the consul? Where the light of the torches? Where the noise of the crowd, the cheers of the circus, the flattering acclamations of the theatre? All that is over; a sudden storm has caused the leaves to fall, and ruined the tree, so that there it lies, like a barren trunk, even the roots of which are rotten, so that it sways to and fro. Where are now the fair-spoken friends, who offer incense to power, and have no thought but how to please, by their words and by their actions? It was all nothing but a dream of the night, which faded when day broke. It was spring flowers: spring passed, and they withered. It was a shadow, which is no more; smoke, which has passed away. Therefore, we ought always to repeat to ourselves the divine words: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity! These words ought to be engraved upon the walls, on our clothes, over the markets, in the streets, and especially in the conscience of us all; and we ought constantly to think of them, for the multitude takes lying and outward show, the illusion of earthly things, for realities. Each day, at each meal, on all occasions when people meet together, each one

ought to repeat these words to his neighbour, each one ought to hear them from his neighbour: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity! Did I not always tell you," he continued, apostrophising Eutropius, "that riches are fleeting? But you would not listen to me. Did I not tell you that they are ungrateful? But you would not believe me." See, experience has shown you that riches are not merely fleeting and ungrateful, but also that they are murderous. It is they which have brought you here, and which make you tremble here; and the Church, on which you waged war, has opened her arms to you, and drawn you to her breast. But the theatre, which you protected, and in favour of which you often got angry with me, has betrayed and overthrown you. The circus, which swallowed up your riches, has drawn the sword against you; whilst the Church, which your wrath smote without any reason, does everything possible to save you from ruin. I do not say that in order to triumph over an unfortunate man, but in order to secure the happiness of those who are fortunate. How is that to be? By our meditating on the inconstancy of human things. For if this man had feared the vicissitudes of fate, he would not have experienced them. But as he did not suffer himself to be amended, either by his own experience or by that of others, do you, who now live in abundance and riches, be wise and profit by his misfortune." He then explained, with great dignity, why he considered that refuge should be accorded to Eutropius, despite his unworthiness; and finally wound up in

words to this effect: "Let us fall at the feet of the Emperor, or rather let us implore the God of love to soften the anger of the Emperor, and touch his heart to such pity that he will grant us full pardon. How will you be able, at the end of this service, to approach the Body of the Lord? how will you be able to utter the words of the prescribed prayer: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," if you demand punishment for the offences committed against you? We do not deny that he has committed great injustice, but it is not the time for judging, it is the time for being compassionate; it is not the time for demanding a reckoning, it is the time for granting pardon. Therefore, let no one yield to bad feelings, but let us entreat the God of love to grant him a little longer life, to save him from the death which threatens him, and to allow him to cleanse himself of his sins, and let us also all in common beseech the charitable Emperor to grant safety to a man at the foot of the altar."

The riot in the garrison soon began again; the Great Church was invested by soldiers prepared to force an entrance; Chrysostom himself, seized by some among them, was led before the emperor; he still steadily refused to give up his suppliant. But Eutropius became alarmed; he left his asylum; he was exiled to Cyprus, and put to death some time afterwards. The Sunday which followed his arrest, Chrysostom delivered a second homily on the same subject. He related the late occurrences with that pathos which belongs to himself alone, and he

explained them, for it is clear that they had been differently related and interpreted; he made them a text for eulogising the greatness and the power of the Church. "Do not say that the traitor has been betrayed by the Church. If he had not left the sanctuary he would not have been betrayed." Then, as if Eutropius were present, he continued: "If you wished to be saved you should have held fast by the altar. It was not the walls that protected you, but Divine Providence that defended you. You were a sinner: God does not repulse you for that, since He came to call not the just but sinners to repentance. The 'woman that was a sinner' was saved; because she embraced the knees of Jesus. Nothing can be compared with the Church. The walls decay and fall to pieces; the Church does not grow old. The walls are overthrown by the barbarians, the Church cannot be conquered even by the spirits of evil; the facts themselves prove that these words are not an empty boast. How many have fought against the Church, and these her enemies have perished; but she has risen above the heavens. Such is the greatness of the Church. When she is attacked she triumphs, and when she is outraged she only appears the more glorious for it. She receives wounds, but she never sinks under those wounds; she is tossed about by the waves, but never founders."

This period of disturbance which John passed through, and which lasted for about two years,[1]

[1] I mean that period which includes the fall of Eutropius and the revolt of Gaïnas.

was peculiarly favourable to the development of his eloquence, which then attained its full growth. At Antioch he had shown himself a master in the delicate art of moral exhortation and of familiar conference; he had succeeded, with rare skill, in uniting with the eager, urgent, topical style, which had been created by Greek philosophy (especially by Stoicism), the unction and charity which belong especially to Christianity.[1] At Constantinople, in these troubled times, that marvellous gift of pathos, which had already served him so well in 387, was revealed to a still greater extent. The homilies which he delivered then, full of great and vivid pictures, which flash before us like lightning, borne along by an irresistible force as by the rushing sound of a storm, show on each page the imprint of the tragic events which gave them birth. I should advise that, after the extract I have just quoted, should be read that bit in which the orator describes the rioters howling round the Great Church, and places himself upon the scene at the time when the soldiers, who were demanding that Eutropius should be given up to them, dragged him before the emperor.

At the same time these two homilies on the disgrace of Eutropius possess another kind of interest. The Homilies on the Statues had shown us how at Antioch John gained the affection of

[1] I do not intend to say that John *had the intention* of imitating the tone of ancient philosophy in his *protreptics*; he reproduced it quite spontaneously, and without conscious imitation; but the analogy is evident.

his audience; these latter may make us understand how, at the very moment when his eloquence reached its maximum of vehemence and brilliancy, he deeply wounded some of his hearers at Constantinople, and, as he had already done by his courageous reform of the clergy, sowed the seeds of terrible hatred against himself in some hearts.

The liberty of the word of the Gospel was ill understood in the capital; it ran counter to every habit and custom. Chrysostom had already excited considerable surprise when he had treated the rich, according to his custom, without any deference. The tone in which he had spoken about the fall of Eutropius in his first homily, the skill that he had shown in drawing from it for all his audience, as a general lesson, the proof of the emptiness of the goods of this world, had touched some, but scandalised others. He was obliged on the next Sunday to explain his intentions. "I speak thus, not to draw down misfortune on you —far be the thought from me!—nor to re-open the wound, but to cause the very shipwreck of others to teach us how to find the harbour. When the armed soldiers were threatening, when the town was burning, when the crown was powerless, when the purple was insulted, when the fury of the army burst forth, where were riches then? Where were the slaves? Everyone was fleeing. Where were the friends? They had all thrown off the mask. Where were the houses? All were closed. Am I now to be treated as a troublesome and unbearable person because I constantly repeat:

'Riches betray those who make a bad use of them?' The time has come, which has shown the truth of my words. Why are you so much attached to riches, when they are no use to you in the event of catastrophes? If they are any good, let them prove it when you fall into misfortune. But many people cast at me this reproach: you are always attacking the rich. Yes, certainly, for they are always attacking the poor; besides, I do not attack the rich, but those who use riches badly. I say so always; it is not the rich I accuse, but the misers; riches are one thing and avarice another. Learn to distinguish things, and not to confuse together what ought not to be confused. You are rich? I do not forbid you to be so. You take possession of the property of another? Then I can be silent no longer. Do you wish to stone me? I am ready to shed my blood if I can only hinder sin. *Hatred and conflict have no terrors for me; there is only one thing I care about, the improvement of my hearers.* The rich and the poor are alike my children. Therefore if you attack the poor I accuse you. But the poor man in such a case does not suffer as much as the rich man; for the poor man only suffers in his body, and you, you are injuring your own soul. Let him who wishes to stone me, stone me; let him who wishes to hate me, hate me. I fear no evil, I fear nothing but sin. If no one can convince me of a sin, the whole world may make war upon me, and that war will be a glory to me."

Bold language, through which for the first time

glimmers a spark of pride. In proportion as Chrysostom's task grows larger, as he passes from speech to action, as he perceives either open resistance or secret intrigue standing as an obstacle in his path, he sometimes gets angry and embittered. His eloquence grows all the greater for it; but does his influence over souls increase proportionately? I have more confidence, as a means of conversion, in those incomparably tender and familiar accents that we hear in almost all the Antioch homilies.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLT OF GAÏNAS, AND THE INTERVENTION OF JOHN—JOHN'S PASTORAL VISITATION IN ASIA MINOR

THE fall of Eutropius did not put an end to the manœuvres of Gaïnas, who, from demand after demand, soon proceeded to open revolt. He began, after having definitely concluded an understanding with Tribigild, whom at first he had been commissioned to oppose, by insisting that three other important personages should be given up to him; the consul Aurelian, Saturninus, and a certain John. He was then encamped quite close to Constantinople on the other shore of the Propontis at Chalcedon (Scutari). Arcadius was, as usual, incapable of forming a resolution. Aurelian and his two companions sacrificed themselves, and of their own free will went and gave themselves up to Gaïnas. Chrysostom, who seems to have kept up friendly relations with Aurelian, and who was very much afraid that the Gothic general, an Arian, would push his advantages too far, presented himself as willing to attempt mediation, and went to the camp of the barbarians. He induced Gaïnas to declare that he would be satisfied with the banishment of Aurelian, Saturninus and John. Arcadius

had an interview with the rebel chief in a chapel near Constantinople, and granted him the supreme command of his army. During all this period, in which Chrysostom's intervention was very active, he was not able to preach, and he explains himself on the subject in the first homily which he delivered as soon as peace was concluded; in its course he makes frequent allusion to these recent events, and enlarges once more upon those commonplaces concerning the fickleness of fate, which were so familiar to him.

One of the reasons, which explain the activity which he showed in serving as a negotiator between Gaïnas and the Emperor, is very probably that he dreaded power passing into the hands of an Arian chief, surrounded, even in his camp, by many and learned members of the Arian clergy. His fears were well grounded, for hardly had Gaïnas forced the emperor to come to terms with him than he demanded for his co-religionists a church within the interior of the capital. Nothing could have touched Chrysostom more nearly; we remember his recent conduct in the affair of the Arian processions; he was in danger of not merely losing the ground that he had gained, but of seeing the respective situation of the two parties go back almost to the point at which it was before Theodosius. He had a second interview with the Goth, and succeeded in convincing him that it would be better not to pursue his demand. After fresh complications, in the course of which Constantinople was threatened with assault and pillage, Gaïnas retired into

Thrace, and the bishop and his flock breathed freely again.

Shortly after this Chrysostom resumed the regular course of his preaching, and delivered (still in 400, or in the beginning of 401) an important series of sermons on the Acts of the Apostles. In them he frequently alludes to the dangers which they had all just been through, and takes pleasure in expatiating on this subject; that if catastrophes produce a great effect on our souls, when they are imminent or present, nothing is more quickly forgotten, and we fall back the next day into our ordinary indifference and vices.[1] This same year, 400, when circumstances imposed upon John an important political *rôle*, also saw him carrying his reforming activity beyond his own diocese. The archbishop of Constantinople had gradually acquired a kind of suzerainty even over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia and Asia. Under the presidency of Chrysostom, a synod, at which bishops of Asia appeared side by side with bishops of Thrace, was opened at Byzantium in the month of May 400. One of the bishops present, Eusebius of Valentiniopolis, there lodged a complaint against Antoninus, metropolitan of Ephesus, against whom he brought six accusations, for the most part very serious. We shall only concern ourselves with the last, which had a more general character, and implicated in the charge a certain number of other people; as Antoninus died soon afterwards, it is the only one

[1] For instance in the 49th homily, of which I spoke in the preceding book.

which influenced Chrysostom's proceedings in the future. Eusebius said that Antoninus, whose suffragans the other bishops of the diocese of Asia were, had a practice of selling vacant bishoprics for money. Chrysostom, who was afraid that at the bottom of the affair there might be some personal enmity between the two parties, tried at first to arrange the matter amicably. But as he found Eusebius stubborn, and the political events of the day did not allow him to leave the capital himself, he decided that a commission of ten bishops should go to the places in question and set an inquiry on foot. The inquiry was rather complicated; and finally, at the end of the winter of 401, Chrysostom was obliged to go in person to Ephesus, where a synod assembled. It was proved that six bishops had bought their sees for money; they acknowledged it without much reluctance, and the excuses which they alleged are very curious; they show how true still was the unflattering picture of certain episcopal elections, drawn by Chrysostom several years before;[1] they asserted—in which they were doubtless sincere — that they had only intrigued for the episcopate in order to escape the municipal charges which everyone avoided at that time, and they consented to be deposed on condition of being repaid the money they had spent. The fact that the affair did really end on the conditions they had desired throws great light on the manners and customs of the century.

John did not leave Ephesus without having

[1] In his treatise on the Priesthood.

provided for the vacancy made by the death of Antoninus. He caused to be elected an old monk named Heraclides, famed for his austerities, and well known to Chrysostom, whose deacon he had been. Later on John was reproached, because Heraclides had tendencies towards Origenism. On way back to his diocese, he also made a stay at Nicomedia, where some time before there had been elected bishop a former deacon of Milan, divested of office by St Ambrose, named Gerontius, who seems to have been a kind of adventurer, but very clever, and extremely popular. Gerontius was deposed and replaced by Pansophios, an excellent man, to whom the inhabitants of Nicomedia only submitted because they were forcibly constrained thereto.

This journey of John's lasted more than three months, and during this time he was running the risk of attempts being made, during his absence, to undermine his influence, since several people, animated by strong hatred, were conspiring against him. His deacon, Serapion, who enjoyed his perfect confidence, and was entirely devoted to him, seems not to have filled his place very well, and to have made several blunders. It appears that a clever intriguer and a talented preacher, though devoid of fervour, Severian of Gabala in Phrygia, plotted against him. We possess a good many homilies by this man. He resided very little in his diocese, preferring to gain applause at Constantinople, where John had received him kindly. We are only imperfectly acquainted with the details of these events,

but we know that when Chrysostom returned to his metropolitan see, he was very much dissatisfied with the new state of things that he found there;[1] he broke utterly with Severian, drove him away, and thus made of him an irreconcilable enemy.

[1] Although he had been received with great demonstrations of joy by the people, as the first homily that he preached after his return testifies.

CHAPTER IV

QUARREL BETWEEN CHRYSOSTOM AND EUDOXIA—THE AFFAIR OF THE ORIGENIST MONKS AND THE INTERVENTION OF THEOPHILUS — THE SYNOD OF THE OAK—CHRYSOSTOM'S FIRST EXILE (401-403)

WHEN Eutropius had fallen, when the revolt of Gaïnas had at length come to an end, the influence of the Empress Eudoxia became all-powerful. John had at first stood high in her favour; she had supported his first enterprises; she had given him efficacious support, more particularly after his conflict with the Arians. Nevertheless, he finally had disagreements with her, as with Eutropius. We need not be very much surprised at this; Eudoxia was not, at the bottom, much better than Eutropius, and John, who had firmly made up his mind not to let any piece of injustice pass without pointing it out, could scarcely avoid offending her. We should like to know the exact details of their quarrel better; it will be seen that there is considerable uncertainty on several essential points. Nevertheless, it appears pretty clearly established that the origin of it was similar to the difference with Eutropius.

Eudoxia, in truth, seems to have committed, either for her own advantage, or for that of her

favourites, extortions like those of which the eunuch had set the example. Palladius, who doubtless uses her gently, does not say much about it, but the pagan historian, Zosimus,[1] reproaches her in formal terms with the different acts of injustice of which she was guilty, to the profit of her household. On what particular occasion John had opposed her is told later on, and George of Alexandria has handed down to us the following anecdote, which has been often republished since; she is said to have deprived the widow of a great personage, recently sentenced to death, named Theognostes, of the only property which remained to her, namely a vineyard in the suburb of the town. At the same time was quoted the letter of remonstrance, which Chrysostom is supposed to have written to the Empress, and which is still extant; the authenticity of this letter is more than doubtful, but the foundation of the story may be correct. George of Alexandria[2] is of no weight at all, his biography of John is full of ridiculous stories. A witness more worthy of credence, and who was a contemporary of Chrysostom, certainly gives us fewer details, but inclines us to think that the tradition contains, at least, a portion of truth; we refer to the deacon, Mark, the biographer of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza. In Porphyry's diocese paganism still existed to a considerable extent; and he therefore wished to have the temples closed; he had already once sent Mark to Constantinople to demand rigorous measures. Chrysostom, who, as we have seen, had no objection

[1] V. 24.

[2] He belongs to the seventh century.

to these measures, introduced him to Eutropius, and was instrumental in his obtaining what he desired.[1] A little later, in 401, Porphyry, when again struggling with the pagans, who resisted him for a long time, went to see John, Bishop of Cesaræa, and, accompanied by Mark, also betook himself to the capital; he tried the same measures and applied to the same intermediary. Chrysostom replied: "As to myself, I cannot speak to the Emperor; *the Empress has, in fact, prejudiced him against me, because I reproached her with regard to some property that she wanted, and took away from its owner.* As to the whole matter, I do not trouble myself much about this anger, and care nothing for it; they are injuring themselves, not me; besides, if by chance they succeeded in injuring my body, they would thereby do service to my soul. Nevertheless, let us leave that to the goodness of God. As to what concerns your request, I will, if God pleases, send to-morrow for the eunuch Amantius, chamberlain to the Empress; he enjoys her confidence, and is a true servant of God; I will entrust the affair to him."[2]

Such was the state of affairs, when matters were complicated by a fresh incident, which again brought Theophilus of Alexandria into John's presence. The influence of Origen was always great in the East, although the heterodoxy contained in certain elements of his doctrine was felt more and more keenly. There were ardent

[1] Mark the Deacon. Life of Porphyry (page 12, edition of the Teubner collection).

[2] *Ibid.* p. 33.

followers of Origen, there were equally passionate opponents, and there was also a sort of third party, who, though unhesitatingly condemning his private opinions, remained all the same much attached to the memory of the great doctor of Alexandria. Hence arose controversies, which were particularly acute at Jerusalem at the time when St Jerome and Rufinus were there, and which threw Egypt into almost as great a state of excitement. There, among the cenobites of the deserts of Nitria, Origen had avowed partisans; at their head were four monks, four brothers, Dioscuros, Ammonios, Eusebius, and Euthymios, who were called the Great or Tall Brothers (Ἀδελφοὶ μακρόι).[1] Theophilus had at first kept up excellent relations with them, and then a rupture took place. The Bishop of Alexandria, who was of a very peculiar disposition, and easily roused to violence when thwarted, fell out about the same time with one of the best priests of his church, Isidore, for a reason which seems to have been very little to his credit.[2] Isidore and the Tall Brothers joined forces. In a synod to which, in 399, Theophilus summoned the Egyptian bishops, the heterodox opinions of Origen were condemned, and the reading of his

[1] On this question of the Tall Brothers the reader should consult, besides the Dialogue of Palladius, the Lausiac History.

[2] Theophilus was a great builder, and, consequently, very extravagant. An Alexandrian lady had entrusted to Isidore a rather large sum of money, for a charitable work, on condition that the bishop should know nothing about it; the bishop found it out, and suspended Isidore.

works forbidden. The monks refused to submit to this decision, and made use of tactics very like those of the Jansenists in France. They did not say, it is true, that the condemned propositions were not in Origen, but they maintained that they did not emanate from Origen, and that later heretics had interpolated them in his writings. Theophilus appealed to the secular arm, and the Tall Brothers were obliged to leave their solitude; they took refuge in Palestine, and then at Constantinople. Chrysostom, like so many great Christians of his time, like St Basil, like St Gregory Nazianzen, without sharing the peculiar doctrines of Origen, was among those who admired him.[1] He received the Tall Brothers, but with the necessary prudence, refusing to admit them to communion before having obtained exact information from Alexandria; he only offered them an asylum within the precincts of the Church of the Resurrection. He then began negotiations with Theophilus in the hope of effecting a reconciliation, but failed utterly. The Tall Brethren then conceived the idea of addressing themselves to the Empress; they presented a petition to her, and Eudoxia immediately took their cause in hand. She induced Arcadius to convoke a synod, which was to decide concerning the accusations which Theophilus had caused to be formulated against

[1] Nevertheless, not only did he not share his particular opinions, but we have also seen how much his exegetic method contrasted with that of Origen. Therefore, he had no urgent reasons, from the doctrinal point of view, for protecting the Origenists.

the Origenists by monks delegated by him for this purpose.

Meantime, a new actor appeared upon the scenes, Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, an excellent man, a fairly good compiler, and an indefatigable busybody. Epiphanius at first took the side of Theophilus most energetically; he convoked a synod at the end of 402, and by it caused Origen's doctrines to be condemned; then, at the beginning of 403, he went to Constantinople, put himself forward rather rashly, and nearly came to open combat with Chrysostom without very well knowing why; and finally, though he had not got much farther in understanding the real situation, abandoned the struggle and returned to his island. Besides, Theophilus did not need him, he was perfectly acquainted with everything which was happening at Constantinople, where he employed trusty agents. He found three valuable allies in three bishops, who at that time showed themselves Chrysostom's implacable enemies. We know one, Severian of Gabala. After the rupture that we have spoken of, John, in order to please Eudoxia, with whom he had not yet broken, had been reconciled to him, but the reconciliation did not last. We are less well acquainted with Antiochus. Acacius, bishop of Berœa, in Syria—for Chrysostom's most violent adversaries were at this time Syrians[1]—cherished ill-feeling against Chrysostom, if Palladius is a trustworthy authority on the subject, for a

[1] We shall soon see, on the other hand, touching examples of the friendships which John kept up at Antioch.

most futile reason, namely, because on his arrival at Constantinople the bishop had put him into a somewhat modest lodging. Ill supplied as we are with accurate documents concerning all these events, we are obliged to be a little guarded in our judgment of the persons concerned; nevertheless, not one of John's enemies seems to have been worthy of much interest. Round the three bishops were grouped the representatives of the malcontents of every kind, brought into existence by Chrysostom's ardent preaching; in this coalition the monks were more particularly represented by Isaac, and the widows by Marsa, Eugraphia and Castricia.

It might have been thought, at the beginning of the conflict, that the state of things looked bad for Theophilus. Arcadius had summoned him to Constantinople, there to submit himself to the judgment of a council presided over by Chrysostom, and it is a curious fact that this measure had been taken at the instigation of Eudoxia. It is difficult to say what impulse she had obeyed, but, in any case, when Theophilus arrived, she was again quite hostile to John, and was waiting[1] impatiently for the time for entering upon an active campaign. It was at the beginning of 403 that the bishop of Alexandria made his appearance first at Chalcedon, then at Constantinople; he had taken care to be accompanied by a rather imposing cortège of Egyptian bishops. Although John received him kindly,

[1] It was, we are told, in consequence of a fresh homily against luxury, in which Eudoxia thought she recognised her own portrait. We do not possess this homily.

Theophilus avoided holding intercourse with him.[1] He did not take up his residence entirely at Constantinople, but for some weeks divided his movements between the capital and Chalcedon. His manœuvres had been so speedy, that the situation was completely reversed. He managed to add to the bishops whom he had brought with him a certain number of Chrysostom's suffragans, who were displeased with their metropolitan; he drew over to his side, by displaying great cordiality towards them, two deacons, whom John had deprived of office, and who were athirst for vengeance. In short, people heard one day that a synod composed of thirty-six bishops had met near Chalcedon, under the presidency of Theophilus, had put aside the question of the Origenists, and had replaced it by the examination of a long list of grievances drawn up against Chrysostom. This synod was opened, and held in a domain which had belonged to Rufinus,[2] and which was called "The Oak." Hence the name under which it is known—*Synod of the Oak*.

We have before us the list of complaints preferred against John;[3] it proves with what unjust passion Theophilus managed the whole affair. Palladius tells us that the bishop of Alexandria had been careful, when coming to Constantinople, to bring with him considerable sums of money, which he successfully

[1] With regard to this arrival of Theophilus, we have the testimony of Chrysostom himself in his first letter to Pope Innocent.

[2] The Rufinus of Claudian's invectives. Rufinus had built there a beautiful house, and laid out a fine park.

[3] Photius, Library, codex lix.

employed for the advantage of his cause. If he had no hesitation in enlisting partisans by means of bribery, he was not more scrupulous when it was a question of collecting the elements of accusation against his rival. Some of the alleged grievances turn plainly to the advantage of the accused; others are not less clearly calumnies in the eyes of anyone who knows Chrysostom even to the smallest extent; lastly, others are pitifully ridiculous. Let us place among the first the complaint of the archdeacon John, that Chrysostom had deposed him for having beaten his slave; or of this other, that John[1] had taken upon himself the defence of some pagans. Among the second, let us point out this one: that no one could say what had become of the Church revenues. Those charitable expenses, which John had set on foot, perhaps with some generous imprudence, were made a subject for indirectly accusing him of peculation. Of the same kind are a certain number of heads of accusation, in which some words that he may really have uttered were taken from their context, and credited with a wrong meaning; for instance, he was reproached with having treated ecclesiastics as people without honour, as corrupt men who expose themselves to contempt, are not worth three farthings; of encouraging persons to sin, by saying to the sinner, "If you sin a second time, do penance a second time; and as often as you sin, come

[1] This is the full text: that he took under his protection pagans who have done great harm to the Christians; that he kept them in the church, and defended them; John had certainly good reasons for being interested in them.

to me, I will help you." Lastly, it was childish to allege that John, who had, as we know, delicate health, "dressed and undressed on the episcopal throne, that he eat a pastille of honey"; and it was not much less so to reproach him with certain expressions, which savoured of paganism, and which had escaped him in the heat of improvisation, as, for instance, when he spoke of "a table full of Erinyes." Some of the complaints made it clear that personal questions had been of prime importance in the conflict; he was accused of "having stirred up disturbances against Severian." Lastly, the synod, as it showed even more plainly later on by the sentence that it gave, tried to transform the affair into a political trial; the bishop was reproached "with encouraging the multitude to revolt, even against the Synod."

Whilst the "Synod of the Oak" was assembling, Chrysostom had himself collected together forty bishops, whilst the Synod only numbered thirty-six. But when he saw that his cause was absolutely compromised, he advised them to return to their dioceses. Nevertheless they were still with him when the two delegates, sent by Theophilus, presented themselves, two Libyan bishops, Paul of Erythræa, and Dioscuros of Dardanum: the summons included with himself, Serapion and Tigrius, two of his priests. Although it was asserted among his friends that Theophilus was committing the same unlawful action against which he had himself protested in the affair of the Origenist monks, I mean that he intervened unjustly outside his own province. John declared

himself ready to appear, on one condition; he demanded that four bishops, whom he looked upon as his personal enemies, Theophilus, Severian, Antiochus and Acacius, instead of ranking among the judges, should confine themselves to the *rôle* of accusers. The Synod took no notice, and pronounced a sentence which affirmed that the refusal to appear was equal to a confession; consequently John was deposed. After which the sentence most perfidiously added that amongst the accusations was one which was not within the Synod's province, and fell under the jurisdiction of the law of high-treason. "Therefore the pious Emperor ought to take care that Chrysostom should be banished from his see, even if it were by force, and punished for this last crime; for bishops were not allowed to judge him concerning this offence." The serious nature of this addition is obvious. What was its hidden meaning? According to Palladius it was a question of violent words that John was said to have pronounced against Eudoxia, comparing her to Jezebel.

When Chrysostom learnt that he was deposed, he did not propose to resist by force the force with which he was threatened, yet he thought it due to his dignity not to descend of his own free will from his episcopal throne, but to make his enemies constrain him to it. First of all he gathered together all his faithful flock in the church, and preached a homily from which the following is an extract: "Many are the waves, and powerful is the flood; but let us have no fear of foundering, for we are on the rock. Let the sea roar in fury, it cannot over-

throw the rock; let the waves gather themselves up higher and yet higher, the ship of Jesus cannot founder. Tell me, what are we afraid of? Death? Christ is my life, and death is my victory. Exile? 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' The loss of earthly goods? We brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out of it. As for the dangers of the world, I despise them, and as for its magnificence, I scorn it. I do not fear poverty, and have no need of riches; I am not afraid of death, I do not wish to live, unless it is for your good. That is why I am exhorting you to-day to take comfort, for no one can separate me from you. 'What God has joined together, let no man put asunder'" (Matt. xix. 6). He continued to enlarge with great eloquence upon this theme, that the church does not consist in walls, but in the community of the faithful, and then returning to his own case, exclaimed: "Christ is with me, what can I fear? When the floods of the sea and the anger of the masters of this world rise up against me, their united force has no more strength against me than a spider's web. . . . If it is God's will that this thing should happen, let it happen; if He wills that I should remain here, all thanks be given to Him. In whatever place He wills me to be, I thank Him. Let no one trouble you, only persevere in prayer. Heed not the machinations of the evil spirit, who desires to interrupt your pious zeal, to stifle your devout attachment to prayer and practices of devotion. But he will not succeed, and he will not be able to banish from your souls your pious zeal; he

will merely make you redouble your vigilance and your ardour. To-morrow I will be with you at the hour of prayer; for where I am you are also, and where you are I am also. We are only one body; the body will not allow itself to be separated from the head, nor the head from the body. If we are separated by space, we are united by love. Even death cannot separate us; if my body dies, my soul still lives, and bears its faithful flock in mind. I am ready to give my life a thousand times for you, and there is no reason for you to be thankful to me for it. I am merely doing my duty. 'For the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.'"[1]

Certainly this language, so marvellously pathetic, was bold under existing circumstances, and ran the risk of troubling and disturbing the minds of men to a certain extent. Such discourses explain the fact that writers, who lived hardly any later than himself—for instance, Zosimus—have represented John as a sort of demagogue;[2] that so many modern historians, from Gibbon to Amédée Thiery, have pronounced almost the same judgment upon him. Neander[3] himself, who was so tenderly attached to Chrysostom, thinks that he then passed the bounds of moderation.—For my part, I do not contradict him; I admit that this language is not free from danger.—But let us not forget to set over against it the irreproachable conduct of the man who spoke with so much passion. The third day after the

[1] Gospel of St John, x. 12.

[2] He was, says Zosimus, skilful in ruling the crowd.

[3] Vol. ii. p. 168.

sentence the bishop was warned that force was about to be employed against him; he prudently eluded the populace, and gave himself up to the *curiosus*, on whom devolved the duty of taking him into exile.[1] Nevertheless, the people did not remain long in ignorance, and accompanied him in crowds to the Bosphorus, where he had to embark. This is how he himself later on described his feelings in that tragic hour: "When I was banished from the city, I did not suffer that fact to trouble me, but said within myself: If the Empress wishes to banish me, let her banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.'[2] If she wishes to have me sawn asunder, let her have me sawn asunder—I have Isaias for a model; if she wants to have me cast into the sea—I call to mind Jonas; if she wants to have me flung into the flames—I remember the three youths in the fiery furnace; if she wants me thrown to the beasts—I think of Daniel in the lions' den; if she desires to have me stoned, let her have me stoned—I have Stephen the protomartyr as an example; if she asks for my head, let her take it—and this time my pattern is St John the Baptist; if she wishes to take from me all that I have, let her take it—'naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall return thither'" (Job i. 21).[3] And he goes on with

[1] Neander (*ibid.*) has clearly perceived that the two accounts, that of Socrates vi. 15 (John arrested at mid-day, and giving himself up, unknown to the people), and of John himself, in his letter to the Pope (the multitude accompanying him to the ship in the evening), are perhaps not incompatible. I reconcile them as he does.

[2] Ps. xxiv. 1.

[3] Ep. cxxv.

many quotations from St Paul. There is, doubtless, a good deal of rhetoric in this extract, written moreover a considerable time after the event; but the fever for martyrdom, which had then taken possession of Chrysostom, makes itself plainly felt.

John's first exile was destined to be short. The attitude of the people, at the time of his departure, must have already caused some uneasiness; in the very night which followed, Constantinople, where earthquakes were not rare, experienced a somewhat severe shock. Eudoxia was superstitious; she was the first to implore the Emperor to recall the bishop, to whom she herself wrote a very humble letter. John was not yet very far off; the imperial messenger caught him up at Prenetum, a small town of Bithynia. He retraced his steps instantly; an enthusiastic crowd awaited him on the shores of the Bosphorus. But Chrysostom did not wish to return into his episcopal city without having been regularly re-established in his see;[1] he was very well aware that this was the most prudent conduct, considering what the future might bring forth. He was not able to act as he intended; he was obliged to yield to the impatience of his flock, who were still in that state of violent over-excitement, for which his last sermon was certainly in part responsible.

[1] The case was provided for in the 4th and 12th canons of the Synod of Antioch in 341, according to which a deposed bishop, in order to have a right to resume possession of his see, must first be re-established by a more important synod than that which had deposed him.

His entrance into Constantinople was triumphant; Eudoxia herself came to receive him. The next day he again got up into the pulpit, and preached the homily called, *After his Return*, which closes the first act of this drama. He gave an account of the events that we have just related; and, carried from one extreme to the other by the violence of his emotion, covered the Empress with praise, which appears to us slightly excessive. The reconciliation seemed complete.

CHAPTER V

SECOND CONFLICT WITH EUDOXIA—THE DISPUTE OVER THE STATUE—DEPARTURE OF JOHN FOR HIS SECOND EXILE

PEACE only lasted two months; from the autumn of 403 the hostility of Chrysostom and Eudoxia was more keen than ever. A fresh incident, such as was, we might say, almost fatally sure to occur, had again stirred up strife between them. In the great square, where stood the senate-house, a few steps from the cathedral, a silver statue of the Empress was erected, and the inauguration, which was celebrated with great pomp, was accompanied by amusements of all sorts, games, dances, and dramatic representations. All his life John had been the sworn foe of spectacles; he opposed them as being licentious and as stained with idolatry. This time the scandal seemed to him the greater, because the church, so near the square where the rejoicings had taken place, had been, in his eyes, polluted by them. He complained fruitlessly to the prefect; his proceedings, his words, or as much of them as was reported, in short his whole conduct in this affair, again wounded the Empress to the quick. What was the precise degree of vehemence

which the tone of the bishop reached this time? We find it rather a puzzling question to answer. It is difficult to know whether to accept as exact in every particular the account that Socrates (H. E. vi. 18), and after him Sozomen (viii. 20), have handed down to us. They say that a short time after this event, John, who was still rather disturbed in mind in consequence of it, preached a homily on the beheading of St John the Baptist, beginning with these words: "Again Herodias storms; again she flies into a passion; again her daughter dances; again she asks for the head of John upon a charger." We have still nowadays a homily bearing Chrysostom's name in which is found this exordium; there is no doubt that it is apocryphal. But, though its authenticity cannot be defended, it remains uncertain whether the sentence quoted by Socrates was attributed to John by his enemies, or whether it was really uttered, and whether the apocryphal homily was composed afterwards, once the subject was known. The first hypothesis has certain probabilities in its favour, for in these few words the attack was very direct and very imprudent, and, as a rule, Chrysostom avoided personalities, properly so called. Still his language in the first crisis had sometimes been very bold, and we cannot affirm that these opening words are simply and solely an invention of his enemies.

It was again Theophilus who, for the second time, directed the campaign carried on against John. He did not return afresh to Constantinople, but pointed out what seemed to him the best measures for finally

getting rid of Chrysostom. He recommended using to his disadvantage those canons of the council of Antioch, which John had clearly foreseen might be employed against him. Certainly there was an opening for chicanery. For the Synod of 341 had been in great measure inspired by Arian tendencies, and the canons in question were definitely aimed at Athanasius. Nevertheless, these canons, though not enjoying incontestable authority, were of general application in the East. They were brought into play in order to depose Chrysostom a second time,[1] or rather to declare that he had unlawfully resumed possession of his see. The Emperor, at the approach of Easter 404, put him, in a manner, under arrest in the episcopal palace.

The crisis became more acute when the feast of Easter fell, and the catechumens were preparing to receive baptism. This was an opportunity for rigorous measures; a band of soldiers invaded the church, and dispersed the faithful with great brutality. These latter met, on one of the following days, in another place, in the enormous baths built in the reign of the Emperor Constantius. They were again dispersed. The soldiery interfered in the same manner, when they sought to assemble outside the walls, in an old wooden circus, dating from the time of Constantine.

These difficulties demanded solution. Nevertheless, matters dragged on till Pentecost; a few days

[1] Chrysostom had himself demanded the convening of a new synod; it was not pressed at first, but as soon as Eudoxia wanted to get rid of him, it was hurried on.

after the feast the Emperor commanded Chrysostom to make ready for exile. On the 20th of June the order was obeyed. John went for the last time to the church; he there bade good-bye to the bishops who had remained faithful to him, and prayed for a short space of time; he then passed into the baptistery, where he received the deaconesses, and mingled with his farewells to them some touching exhortations. Finally, he went out by the eastern door of the church, whilst, in order to mislead the expectant people, the mule, which he generally rode, was ostensibly waiting before the western door. For the second time Chrysostom gave himself up into the hands of the officer sent by Arcadius; for the second time he took his way to the Bosphorus.

Fourth Book

EXILE

CHAPTER I

JOURNEY ACROSS ASIA-MINOR — STAY AT NICÆA— CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE DEACONESSES OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE PRIESTS OF ANTIOCH

CHRYSOSTOM set forth for exile with a tolerably strong escort of the prefect's soldiers, who showed themselves kindly disposed towards him, and did their best to render him all the little services which his somewhat wretched state of health required.[1] He did not as yet know, and indeed, only learnt in the course of the journey, what place of residence would be assigned to him. The faithful friends, whom he had left in Constantinople, hoped that they might one day be useful to him. A deaconess, named Sabiniana, had heard it said that he would be banished to the shores of the Black Sea, and was preparing to join him there;[2] others asserted that it would be to Sebaste in Armenia, and a rich man, Arabios by name, who possessed considerable property there, put a house at his

[1] Ep. x.

[2] Ep. xiii.

disposal. John at last heard that his place of abode would be Cucusus, at the further end of Cappadocia, on the frontiers of Cilicia, in Armenia-Minor. The country was thinly populated, and the climate severe; it was exposed to the incursions of the Isaurian brigands, who were his near neighbours. John, not without likelihood, attributed this choice, well calculated to increase his sufferings, to Eudoxia.[1]

If for the future we are without his homilies, the correspondence which he kept up with the deaconesses of Constantinople, especially with Olympias, or with his friends at Antioch, allows us to follow all the vicissitudes of his toilsome journey through Asia Minor. This journey was divided by various halts, some of which were a rest for Chrysostom, whilst others had serious annoyances in store for him. The first was at Nicæa, where he was able to rest a month. He was then in a very calm frame of mind; he counselled his deaconesses to imitate his resignation. "If you wish to receive many letters from us," he wrote to Olympias, "prove to us that our letters, when multiplied, bring you profit; then you will see that we shall grant you abundantly what you ask. . . . I am in good health and joyous," he said another day, "and one thing alone troubles me; that is, not being certain whether you are in the same state of gladness as I am."[2] At the same time that need of activity, which was so strong in him, again took possession of him; being no longer able to devote himself to his flock, he sought another

[1] Ep. cxxv. [2] Ep. x.; Ep. xi.

task. We have seen what trouble he had already taken in working for the conversion of the last-remaining pagans, and how he had, in particular, undertaken to spread Christianity through Phœnicia. Not only had he, as far as he could, helped the bishop Porphyry of Gaza in his propaganda, but also he made good use of the valuable friendships which he had retained at Antioch, by organising in that city a kind of mission, the direction of which he entrusted to the priest Constantius. At Nicæa, during the calmer days that he spent there, he was filled with fresh enthusiasm for this work. He was shown a monk, renowned for his sanctity, one of those who had themselves walled up in a kind of cell, only leaving an opening through which other people could pass their food to them; he sent him to Antioch to join the missionaries of Phœnicia, and nothing shows more plainly than this fact the great modification that some of his ideas had undergone since his youth; he now placed active charity before anything. When he was on the point of leaving Nicæa, he wrote a beautiful letter to the priest Constantius, and besought him earnestly to keep him constantly informed of the progress of the mission.

On learning that the abode assigned to him was Cucusus, he was at first distressed, and disclosed the feelings which possessed him to the deaconess Theodora,[1] saying that he has not succeeded in obtaining "what the greatest criminals obtain, not being sent into so wild and distant a country." But he soon resumed his self-command,

[1] Ep. cxx.

resigned himself, and begged his friends to take no steps to change the place of his exile. He started in the heat of summer; he was obliged to traverse the greater part of Asia Minor, and that part in which journeys were most difficult, the population the most scattered and also the most rude, and where the danger of Isaurian incursions was great. The journey as far as Cesaræa in Cappadocia was painful to him: he had fever, he was very ill-received by certain bishops;[1] for instance, when he was crossing Galatia, by Leontius of Ancyra, who had already shown himself as an enemy at the second of the two councils which had deposed Chrysostom. He reckoned on meeting with a better reception from Pharetrius, at Cesaræa, but he was mistaken. He could scarcely find a lodging in one of the suburbs, when he arrived worn out. This is what he then wrote to Theodora: "I am quite broken down, dead a thousand times over. Those who will deliver these letters to you will be able to tell you about it better than anyone else, although they have only remained a little time with me. I could not even speak to them, so much exhausted was I by continual fever, despite which I had to travel day and night, tormented by the heat, worn out by sleeplessness, want of attendance, and of food. I have suffered, and still suffer worse than the criminals in the mines and prisons. I have at last managed to reach Cesaræa, which is my harbour after the storm. But even this harbour

[1] "I fear nothing as much as the bishops, some few excepted," he wrote later on to Olympias. Ep. xiv.

has not been able to repair all the damages caused by the tempest, such terrible evils had the time I had just gone through brought upon me. Nevertheless, I began to breathe again after my arrival at Cesaræa, when I was again able to drink pure water, and eat something besides mouldy bread as hard as a stone."

His state of health soon improved, and he received a welcome which touched him from a certain number of the inhabitants of Cesaræa, among whom he particularly mentions doctors and rhetoricians.[1] But at the very time when he considered himself able to set out again, an incursion of the Isaurians into the neighbouring country districts compelled him to put off his departure. He decided to remain; it was only to find himself struggling against another danger. A fanatical band of monks came and made violent demonstrations before his house, and the soldiers of the escort had great trouble in defending him against their fury. The same menaces were renewed on successive days; Chrysostom was obliged to get into a litter, and leave Cesaræa. He accepted the hospitality offered him in the vicinity by a rich landowner named Seleucia. But hardly was he installed in the villa than this woman, scared by the threats addressed to her by the adversaries of the proscribed man, was seized with such terror that her one thought was to get rid of him; she played a sort of comedy in the middle of the night, caused her guest to be hastily awakened, saying that the Isaurians were approaching, and Chrysostom

[1] Ep. xii. and xiv. to Olympias.

was obliged to leave his place of refuge very suddenly. The last part of the journey, that which had at first alarmed him most, was, on the contrary, accomplished, by happy chance, without any difficulty worth mentioning. On his arrival he wrote to a certain Faustinus, who, at Cesaræa, had shown him marks of affection: "I have traversed without fear and without inconvenience the toilsome, dangerous and desert road, which leads from down yonder hither; I have been safer there than in the most civilised towns." [1]

Chrysostom reached Cucusus seventy days after his departure from Constantinople. In this somewhat poor little town, off the main road, which he himself has called "the most desert place in all the earth," [2] he nevertheless found himself less badly off than he had feared. A rich person in the country, Dioscuros, had put a house at his disposal, and had sent, even to Cesaræa, one of his slaves to beg him to accept his hospitality. His friends in Constantinople, some of whom happened to have property in that part of the country, gave instructions to their stewards to take care that he should want for nothing.[3] Others, like that priest Constantius at Antioch, whom the very friendship that he maintained with John exposed to the hatred of the bishop Porphyry, and forced to depart from the city, came to visit him there. This sojourn at Cucusus, which John had dreaded, was, on the contrary, a rest and consolation to him.

[1] Ep. lxxxiv. [2] Ep. ccxxxiv. [3] Ep. lxxiv.

CHAPTER II

THE SITUATION AT CONSTANTINOPLE AFTER JOHN'S DEPARTURE—THE JOANNITES—JOHN'S SUCCESSOR —INTERVENTION OF THE POPE—JOHN'S FRESH EXILE TO PITYONTES—DEATH OF CHRYSOSTOM

WHEN John had left Constantinople, the minds of men were much excited. Everything contributed to give a very serious character to the situation. John's partisans, and especially those devoted friends that he had among the people, felt the deepest and most justifiable indignation when they recalled the intrigues of which he had been the victim; violent resentment had burnt in the depths of many hearts during the rather long period which the bishop had been confined within his own palace; the bloody brawls which had interrupted the Paschal ceremonies increased this anger. Everyone felt, so to say, in an atmosphere of sedition when Chrysostom departed, and the very precautions which he felt compelled to take in order to conceal his departure prove this very clearly. There was small chance of the crisis coming to a peaceful end. We possess little information concerning the events which closely followed Chrysostom's exile, and it is difficult for us to decide impartially who is responsible for certain

occurrences. A great fire consumed the church of Santa Sophia, where John had preached, and also one of the finest civil edifices in the city, the senate-house, which was quite close. John's partisans, the Joannites, as they were called, were accused of having originated it. Were there really among the multitude of Joannites some few persons mad enough thus to compromise all their party? We cannot say that it is impossible, but neither is it quite impossible that the crime should have been wrongly attributed to them, either designedly, or at least on very slight grounds, and that it should readily have been made a pretext for putting into execution the rigorous measures that were being prepared. As a matter of fact, the cause of the fire remained obscure, and no proof was discovered.[1] The prefect of Constantinople was then a pagan, Optatus, and showed himself pitiless. Ecclesiastics were put to the torture. Even outside Constantinople the Joannites were persecuted.

Eudoxia survived her triumph but a few months. Before her death, she had taken care to provide a successor to Chrysostom, so that his deposition might appear quite definite this time. A new bishop was elected without delay, Arsacius, brother to John's predecessor, Nectarius; Arsacius only governed the church of Constantinople a few months. After his death (November 11, 405) the choice fell upon Atticus. But the Joannites, who

[1] Chrysostom writes to a deaconess, Pentadia (Ep. xciv.), to congratulate her on the firmness she had shown during the investigation.

were very numerous, declined to acknowledge either Arsacius or Atticus, and the Christian community was divided by schism. Moreover, John kept up intercourse with his flock by means of active correspondence, and seemed to consider himself still their pastor, though from afar.[1] He had appealed, as his adversaries had also done, to Pope Innocent. The Pope, though he treated Theophilus prudently and gently, decided in favour of John; he refused to acknowledge the validity of the sentence pronounced by the Synod of the Oak, and proposed the summoning of a general council. With a view to this, he got the Emperor Honorius to act as mediator with his brother. But Innocent died before having succeeded in obtaining anything from Arcadius.

Meantime, the second and the third years of John's exile at Cucusus were harder for him than the first months of his exile had been. The climate of the country was trying, cold in winter, very hot in summer. Chrysostom's health had always been extremely delicate; it was worse still after the toilsome and laborious journey that he had been obliged to take. The Isaurian bands continued their plunderings throughout the country; they thus made it absolutely dangerous to stay at Cucusus. John consequently set out for the neighbouring

[1] See the letters cciii., ccx., ccxii., in which he addresses a sharp reproof to two priests, Theophilus and Sallust, on whom he particularly relied for preaching to his flock in his absence, and who responded ill to his confidences. See also his letters to Valentine (ccxvii.) and to Gemellus (cxlii.) which show with what care he followed everything that went on in his church.

fortress of Arabissos. This is what he wrote himself shortly afterwards to the priest Nicolas[1]:—"I have been compelled lately, through the coldest part of the winter, to change my residence constantly, to establish myself sometimes in towns, sometimes in valleys and defiles, driven from pillar to post by the incursions of the Isaurians. At last, when this danger became a little less serious, I fled to Arabissos, because I was in greater security in the citadel of that town than anywhere else; for I do not dwell in the town itself, it would not be safe. I have to put up with an abode which is worse than a prison; for, in fact, not to mention that death is always at our doors, since the Isaurians carry fire and sword about everywhere, we also dread the famine which is threatening us, so large is the multitude crowded together in such a small space."

But whether at Cucusus, or Arabissos, Chrysostom, despite these complaints, was consumed by the same desire for action. He was passionately interested in the success of the missions to Cilicia and Phœnicia;[2] he had dreams of converting Persia, and with this end in view strove to bring back to his side the bishop Maruthas, who had signed the sentence of the Synod of the Oak.[3] He also made his influence felt at Constantinople and at Antioch.[4] His charity increased with his trials, and he never ceased to express it in beautiful language; take the following, for instance, in the letter ccxxii: "Of such nature is love that it is not

[1] Ep. lxix.
Ep. xiv.
[2] Ep. l., li., cxxiii., cxxvi., and so on.
[4] Ep. lxi., cxxxv., cxli.

conquered by the assaults made on it by misfortune; on the contrary, it forces its way through all obstacles, and is like flame in its resistless strength." At the same time, he occupied his enforced leisure in composing two treatises, in which he gave a more dogmatic form to certain ideas, almost bordering on Stoicism, which we find scattered through the course of his homilies. One of these works is entitled thus: *That no one can harm anyone who does not injure himself;* and the other is addressed: *To those who have been scandalised at the misfortunes which have occurred.*

Thus it was that he retained a great number of faithful friends, though at a distance. Therefore he still appeared formidable to his enemies, and they decided to search for a new place of residence, where the exile, sent once more still further from home, would, perhaps, at last lose something of his indefatigable energy, and would meet with less devotion to his service. They thought they had found what they wanted in choosing Pityontes, a small town situated on the eastern shore of the Euxine, in the country of the Tzani, to the north of Colchis. Chrysostom, therefore, found himself compelled to traverse afresh, this time from the south to the north, the whole of Asia Minor. He set out, towards the end of June 407, under the guardianship of two soldiers, one of whom was full of attentions to him, whilst the other was, on the contrary, very rough. He travelled rather slowly through Cappadocia, for in the first weeks of September he had not yet advanced far into

Pontus; he had then just arrived at the little town of Comana, near which the martyr Basiliscus was buried. Very weary, and in worse health than he had yet been, he stopped and passed the night in the chapel, situated at a little distance from the town, where the tomb was. In a dream he thought that he beheld the martyr, and heard him say: "Take comfort, brother, to-morrow we shall be together." In the morning, when he woke, he felt so weak that he begged his guards to put off his departure for a few hours. He did not obtain this favour, and after a journey of a little more than an hour's duration, was manifestly so exhausted that his escort was compelled to retrace its steps and to take him back to Basiliscus' chapel. Chrysostom had no delusions about his state; his end was approaching. He laid aside the dusty garments he was wearing, dressed himself anew, received Communion and prayed fervently. His last words were: "Glory be to God for all things." (September 14th 407).[1]

His death did not immediately bring back peace to the Church of Constantinople. For about thirty years longer there existed a special community of Joannites, who cherished his memory with pious fidelity. They had not been satisfied when Atticus, as a necessary preliminary to being again received into communion with the Pope and the Western Churches, consented to replace John's name on the diptychs. They were content at last, when in 438 the remains of their beloved bishop were trium-

[1] I am merely transcribing the account by Palladius, Dial. xi.

phantly brought back into the capital and deposited in the Church of the Apostles. It was Theodosius II., the son of Eudoxia, who made this solemn reparation to the memory of the man whom his mother had proscribed. He went to meet the procession which was bringing back the sacred remains, and prostrated himself before the coffin.[1]

[1] Theodoret, H. E. V. xxxvi.

CONCLUSION

CHRYSOSTOM was eminently great in two lines; he was incontestably the greatest orator of Christian antiquity; he was also not merely a great bishop, but a great apostle; a bold reformer of the morals of his age, an affectionate friend to the poor and humble, full of the purest Christian spirit, and as charitable as he was energetic. He ventured to attempt what may appear to be a dream, what he regarded as a duty; to introduce into the Church of the fourth century, that is to say, not into a chosen band, or into a small community of saints, but into society at large, the morals of the Gospels in their strictest rigour.

The quotations which it has been my delight to multiply will make the reader feel, better than any analysis, the variety and power of his eloquence. He perfected the homily, making it above all things a practical sermon, intelligible to everyone. The homily, as conceived by him, with its rather loose style, always suggestive of improvisation, contains at the same time very simple dogmatical teaching, given by means of exegesis, which seeks in the sacred text the historical sense and example rather than allegory, and a sermon on morals which is connected, sometimes very closely, sometimes more remotely,

with exegesis, which attacks successively every vice, according to the needs of the day, and offers to the hearers an exact rule of conduct for every state of life. The homily thus understood is in one sense quite original and exclusively Christian; in another sense it descends by perceptible filiation from those popular forms of philosophical explanation (Protreptics, Diatribes, etc.),[1] of which Stoicism in particular had given such striking examples. I do not say that John imitates them deliberately; indeed, I believe that nothing is further from his thoughts, but he uses naturally, and without being clearly aware of it, forms, which by long use had become the common property of all.

At the same time it happened early in Chrysostom's life, when he was as yet only a priest at Antioch, that on certain particularly tragic occasions, notably in the sedition of 387, when this original method, this familiar and urgent style were no longer "the only wear," he all of a sudden made use of another kind of eloquence, brilliant and fascinating, powerful and pathetic, which recalls, despite all differences, the great classical eloquence of Athens and Rome,[2] and frequently equals it. At Constantinople, where Chrysostom, now a bishop, and consequently invested with greater authority, finds himself mixed up with important political events, enters the lists against the powerful in Church and State, and carries on from the pulpit in his church as ardent oratorical disputes

[1] Exhortations, Discussions.

[2] This will be found very well analysed in Paul Albert's thesis.

as did Demosthenes at the Pnyx, or Cicero in the Forum, this grand manner which was, on the whole, exceptional with him at Antioch, becomes almost his ordinary manner. Never did his genius reveal itself so completely as when he preached his two homilies on the disgrace of Eutropius, or during his struggle with Theophilus and Eudoxia, certain sermons, from which we have borrowed largely.

It would be most interesting to distinguish more exactly between these two styles, and to give each its proper characteristics, by seeking to discover precisely of what elements they are composed; likewise to analyse Chrysostom's talent by striving to point out where its real originality lay, and what it owed to different influences, but it would demand a long article, and this is not the place for it. Let us content ourselves with giving some very general indications. The Holy Scriptures were the pasture of Chrysostom's mind; his preaching is only a commentary on them; and when great sermon-writers, like Bossuet, have drawn their inspiration from the same source, they have no better models than him. The boldness of certain metaphors, the pathos of certain apostrophes, an extraordinary vehemence and passion, a frankness of language which goes to extremes;—these are some of the most striking traits of his eloquence, and he owes them partly to his assiduous reading of the Bible, especially of the Prophets. On the other hand, if he is deeply biblical, he is not the less Greek. He

knows the great classics, and occasionally imitates them. Neither is he ignorant of the method of that post-classical oratorical manner, which the historians of Greek literature have agreed to call Asiatic, and he does not hesitate to borrow from it some effects in doubtful taste.[1] It would be curious to note what has thus passed from sophistic philosophy into Christian eloquence. By pursuing this analysis, of which we can now only draw up the programme, we should better understand in what John's superiority consists. Neither should we neglect to point out his defects, for he is not without them; his astonishing facility makes him liable to become verbose; however sincere is his inspiration, he is not exempt from a certain affectation, a tendency to seek the well-turned phrase, and from some amount of rhetoric; his fertile imagination does not always discriminate, and sometimes goes astray.

The fame which John gained by his eloquence is so striking that it sometimes overshadows what is nevertheless his first claim to glory; his apostolate. Let us not forget that, fond as he was of speaking, he did not care for speech for its own sake. He was, before anything else, a great director of consciences and an incomparable practical moralist. Just as his eloquence was by turns familiar and practical, or majestic and pathetic, so in his apostolate he was by turns tender and persuasive, or authoritative

[1] His contemporaries perceived it, as is shown by one of the complaints brought against Chrysostom at the Synod of the Oak; some expressions had been picked out of his sermons which recall certain crazes of the 2nd Sophistic, *cf. Supra*, page 163.

and bold. He shows himself to us specially under the first aspect at Antioch, under the second at Constantinople.

The best years of his life are those which he spent at Antioch surrounded by persons with whom he was well acquainted, where it was easy to him to proportion his efforts to the results he wished to attain. It was then that he successfully caused the impetuosity and the gentleness which were so strangely united in him to work together for the same end; it was then that the opposing qualities which dwelt together in his soul found their perfect equilibrium. When he goes back to Antioch, after some years of retreat in the desert, receives the diaconate and writes his first treatises, he appears to us, despite some youthful impatience and a certain lack of practical sense, as one prepared by nature and reflection for the task about to devolve on him. After he has received the priesthood, and Flavian has made him his preacher-in-ordinary, he very speedily, by daily contact with his audience, understands the meaning of reality. And through this apostolate of rather more than ten years' duration, we do not know which we ought to admire most—his inexhaustible talent, or his daily devotion to his work, or that gift that he possessed above all others of entering into sympathy with his public, or its result shown in his influence over souls, moving them, and, so to say, taking possession of them.

It is more difficult to pronounce a perfectly impartial judgment on his episcopate. First of all, we

are only supplied with very meagre accounts of the details of events. Then, even if we were possessed of the most minute information, it would not be less inevitable that each one, following his own tendencies, should judge slightly differently the line of conduct to be pursued in very delicate situations. It seems to me, all the same, that it is not impossible to make my readers understand what were, in this case also, the nobility and the magnanimity of the views which inspired Chrysostom, and at the same time to what imprudence his very generosity led him. When we have read his homilies, we seem to get a wonderful knowledge of his upright and candid soul, which confides in us unreservedly. There is very little risk of our being mistaken in his intentions. After all, with what did his adversaries reproach him? His reform of the Constantinople clergy? It redounded entirely to his honour. His preaching against the rich? We have already seen its truly Christian spirit; John desires to reconcile rich and poor by means of charity, teaching the latter resignation and the former alms-giving, and uniting them all alike in equal contempt of earthly possessions. His occasional violence of language? We must admit that, noble as was the motive which inspired it, it might sometimes surprise and offend public opinion.

We have still to deal with his strife with the court, his quarrel with the Empress. Here it would be singularly helpful to be acquainted, one by one, with the incidents of this great crisis, so as to decide day by day on the responsibilities of each.

John at last found himself engaged in open contest with the civil power. To what degree had he provoked this contest? When it broke out, had he exhausted all the means of pacific action at his disposal? Were the proceedings of the Empress of such a kind, that the bishop, after ineffectual protestations, had no resource but to break with her? All these are doubtful points. We can judge better by the homilies which have come down to us, and by his letters, of the line he took once the conflict was declared, and after the conflict. If we only look at his deeds, he was above reproach. Sometimes Chrysostom used the gestures and language of a demagogue, but he never had the soul of one.

Nevertheless, in the beginning of the conflict, it is not unlikely that he yielded to his natural impetuosity, and committed some acts of rashness. He had some of the qualities of a man of action; he did not possess them all. Above all, he was no politician. He is not the only bishop in the fourth century who entered the lists against the civil power, after the empire had become Christian. St Ambrose, for his part, was at war with it, and always came off victorious, whether the reigning monarch was Justin or Valentinian, or even Theodosius. This was because Ambrose calculated more carefully than John the forces with which he had to contend and those at his own disposal, and, having always as perfect a mastery over his speech as over his conduct, he never gave anyone a handle against him through imprudence. He knew how to govern men; John only knew how to direct souls.

Chrysostom was not much more of a theologian than he was of a statesman.[1] The subtleties of dialectics attracted him as little as the arts of politics. We have seen how persistently simple was his instruction, and how he devoted himself entirely to preaching the great doctrines which the Christian faith imposes on man; but he preached them with a persuasive ardour calculated to triumph over the most obstinate resistance, and a precision of detail which left no room in timorous souls for any scruple, any hesitation as to conduct. He was great by reason of his intelligence, but more great by reason of his large-heartedness. In the midst of the fourth century, he was full of the purest apostolic spirit. If, amongst all the apostles, he was most strongly attracted to St Paul, it is because St Paul was *par excellence* the apostle of charity. Chrysostom too, even when he allowed himself to be carried away by holy anger, was never in reality anything but charity and love. He loved his flock passionately, and that is why he made so many efforts to correct them. He saw that the world, though it had become Christian, remained the world, and the sight filled him with fear. Throughout his life there was always present to his mind, as a stimulating ideal, that chapter of the Acts in which St Luke has described the infant Church of Jerusalem: "*Et erat multitudinis credentium cor unum et anima una.*" He wanted nothing less than to revive at Antioch and Constantinople this community of saints. He did not

[1] See Neander, and a good *résumé* in Bardenhewer, pp. 322-325, on Chrysostom's theology.

succeed, and doubtless it was impossible for him to succeed; but would he have done all the good he has done, would he have left us the great examples he has left us, if he had not had this hope as a viaticum?

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